

God's Answer and Job's Response ¹

I. The Challenge

There is now a near-consensus that the Book of Job teaches that the universe lacks a moral economy in which deeds are met by appropriate and commensurate reward and punishment ². The purpose of the present essay is to offer an alternative interpretation.

This now-dominant interpretation originated in an article by M. Tsevat in 1966 ³. In Tsevat's reading, YHWH implicitly denies the existence of divine justice. Retribution is not part of reality, but only a delusion: "[W]here the principle of retribution has no valid-

¹ The present essay builds on four of my earlier studies: (1) M.V. Fox, "Job 38 and God's Rhetoric", *Semeia* 18 (1981) 53-61. I argue that God uses rhetorical questions to evoke Job's knowledge as a way of guiding his perceptions. See below, VII. (2) "Job the Pious", *ZAW* 117 (2005) 351-366. Here I examine the interplay of the two levels of communication: God to Job and author to reader. (3) "Reading the Tale of Job (Job 1:1-2:13 + 42:7-17)", *A Critical Engagement*. Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honour of J. Cheryl Exum (eds. D.J.A. CLINES – E.J. VAN WOLDE) (Hebrew Bible Monographs Series 38; Sheffield 2010) 162-179. I reject the interpretation of the frame tale as ironic and Job's repentance as tongue-in-cheek. (4) "Behemoth and Leviathan", *Bib* 93 (2012) 261-267. This is summarized below, in VI.

² Most scholars since the 1960s have accepted this view. Contrary readings are offered by (among others) J. LÉVÊQUE, *Job ou le drame de la foi* (eds. M. GILBERT – F. MIES) (Paris 2007); B.L. NEWELL, "Job: Repentant or Rebellious?", *WTJ* 46 (1984) 298-316; D.C. TIMMER, "God's Speeches, Job's Responses, and the Problem of Coherence in the Book of Job: Sapiential Pedagogy Revisited", *CBQ* 71 (2009) 286-305; S.A. GELLER, "Nature's Answer: The Meaning of the Book of Job in Its Intellectual Context", *Judaism and Ecology*. Created World and Revealed Word (ed. H. TIROSH-SAMUELSON) (Cambridge, MA 2002) 109-132. Geller rightly judges the prevailing interpretation, described earlier, to be "grossly anachronistic in its modern separation of nature and morality, creation and piety" (132).

³ M. TSEVAT, "The Meaning of the Book of Job", *HUCA* 37 (1966) 73-106. I dedicate my essay to the memory of my esteemed teacher, Professor Tsevat, who inspired me to engage with the book of Job.

ity, there can be no injustice”⁴. I will proceed largely by criticizing the case for this thesis as argued by Tsevat. Later refinements do not provide a fundamentally different or stronger argumentation.

A variant of this thesis envisions a god who is not only indifferent to justice but is actively malicious. In response to Job’s complaints, this view claims, God merely intimidates Job and sneers at his ignorance and weakness. God thereby exposes himself as, in D. Robertson’s words, a “charlatan god”⁵ or, in the view of J.B. Curtis, “remote”, “unfeeling”, “unjust”⁶. R. Polzin also sees YHWH as “insensitive” and “cruel”⁷. “Instead of appearing before Job to comfort him, God brings Job to his knees, demands recognition of his power and removes Job’s sufferings only after he forces a cry of repentance from Job’s lips”⁸. But this is not what happens.

II. God’s Attitude

Job had feared that God would “trample me in a storm and multiply my wounds without warrant. He would not let me catch my breath, but would sate me with bitterness” (9,17-18). But God does not do this. He gives Job the hearing that Job longed for and demanded, and twice pauses to let Job have his say (40,2; 42,4). He does not threaten to kill Job, though death is something that Job had (sometimes) longed for (see chapter 3). If a challenge to debate is “trampling” or if a series of rhetorical questions and a description of a well-maintained universe truly “multiplies” wounds, then Job is frailer than he appears in the Dialogue, in which he called on God to show himself to state his case (13,18-27; 14,15) and imag-

⁴ TSEVAT, “Meaning”, 98. This seems something of a sophistry. In places where anarchy reigns and no justice can be expected — Somalia today, for example — vast injustices are committed routinely. There are moral standards that apply to unjust rulers and no less to God. Is Job’s misery to be softened and his indignation mollified by learning that “Divine justice is not an element of reality” (100)? Indifference to justice is not a justification for allowing injustice.

⁵ D.A. ROBERTSON, “The Book of Job: A Literary Study”, *Soundings* 56 (1973) 464.

⁶ J.B. CURTIS, “On Job’s Response to Yahweh”, *JBL* 98 (1979) 510.

⁷ R. POLZIN, *Biblical Structuralism: Method and Subjectivity in the Study of Ancient Texts* (Philadelphia, PA 1977) 106.

⁸ *Biblical Structuralism*, 106.

ined himself speaking truth to power (10,2-27; 13,18-28). In the Theophany, God speaks in the tone of a wise teacher, who scolds the pupil for his ignorance but does not rage, shout, or threaten.

God begins, "Who is this who darkens the plan (עצה) by words without knowledge?" (38,2). The root עצה essentially refers to deliberation: careful thinking and planning and the resolution arrived at by such thinking⁹. Hence "plan" or "design" is a good translation. (When עצה is communicated to others as advice it means "counsel"). It is this design that Job has "obscured" (38,2) and "hidden" (42,3). עצה is a common word and can have no idiosyncratic sense if it is to communicate anything to Job or the reader. From the start, then, Yahweh claims that he has a meaningful design for the world, and this is presumably what he is about to describe. The choice of this word suggests that there is more sense in the divine design than just the absence of retribution. And if God's design were merely the absence of retribution, Job could hardly be accused of having obscured it when he complained of the prevalence of injustice, as when he declared: "The land is given into the hand of the wicked, and he covers the faces of its judges" (9,24), and "The innocent and the wicked he finishes off" (9,22b), and numerous other such complaints.

Although Job's words were ignorant, God's design is something that Job could have known; otherwise, he could hardly be blamed for obscuring it. In the following speeches, God will describe the design by eliciting knowledge accessible to Job (and other humans), not by revealing mysteries¹⁰.

III. Creation

God begins by describing the time of creation (38,4-11). In Tsevat's paraphrase, God says, "You, Job, were not present at the creation of the earth and, consequently, you know nothing about its nature"¹¹. This paraphrase is not accurate. Job knows the facts that God describes: they are part of his cultural knowledge. God asks, "Where were you when I founded the earth? Declare it, if you have

⁹ See M.V. Fox, "Words for Wisdom", *ZAH* 6 (1993) 160-161.

¹⁰ This is contrary to what Zophar thought would happen if YHWH were to speak: "he would tell you the hidden things of wisdom" (11,6).

¹¹ TSEVAT, "Meaning", 83.

understanding” (38,4). Job must silently admit what no one could deny, that he was not there. “Who laid down its measurements — for you know — or who stretched a line upon it?” (38,5). This is not a hard question. The answer is obviously “You, God”. There is nothing degrading in a human not being God or not being present at creation, and Job is keenly aware of his frail humanness. The parenthetical “for you know” is not sarcastic. God is reminding Job that he knows quite well the identity of the architect and builder of the universe. This principle will be illustrated lavishly in the next four chapters.

Nor are the other questions stumbers. “Upon what are its [sc. the world’s] sockets sunk?” (38,6a) Job has already given the answer: “upon nothingness” (26,7). The only function of this question can be to evoke awe at the way the foundation pillars of the earth can rest on the void. The following circumstantial clause, “when the morning stars cried out and all the gods shouted” (38,7) has nothing to contribute to a question meant to stump or intimidate. Rather, it is part of painting a glorious and joyful scene. Note that this circumstantial clause assumes Job’s knowledge of the angels’ rejoicing.

Next God asks, “Who enclosed the sea in doors, when it gushed forth from the womb” (38,8)¹²? The sea is not here the mythical enemy Yamm (as Job regards it in 9,8) but a baby, unruly but controllable. God’s swaddling the infant sea (38,9) introduces a note of tenderness into what was traditionally pictured as a violent act. God asserts control, not by battle — which would be the appropriate image if the main point were YHWH’s might — but by paternal discipline, putting the rowdy child behind doors and setting limits to his roving by an admonition: “Thus far you may come but no farther, and here I stop your proud waves” (38,11)¹³. This passage sets the tone for the rest of the Theophany: God creates an orderly, elegant world, one he takes pride in and cares for, all without much violence. If it be objected that this picture is irrelevant to humans because they are not mentioned, consider what an uncontrolled sea would do to them.

¹² Reading **סך מי**. Thus D.J.A. CLINES, *Job 38-42* (WBC; Nashville, TN 2009) 16. See Clines’s commentary for surveys and discussions of this emendation and others proposed in this essay.

¹³ Emendation is necessary. The best emendation, requiring mainly a re-ordering of consonants, is **רפה אשבית נאון גליך**. Other reasonable emendations produce the same basic sense: the shore is the sea’s limit (see CLINES, *Job 38-42*, 16-18).

IV. Meteorology and Astronomy

YHWH asks, "Does the rain have a father?" and "From whose womb did ice come forth?" (38,28-29). Tsevat rephrases these queries as a taunt: "How do rain, ice, and frost come into being? Give a realistic answer. Do not give Me myths for facts"¹⁴. But the distinction between myths and facts is anachronistic. Those who believe in myths consider them factual. In any case, real knowledge of meteorology is irrelevant, and the questions in 38,28-29 are not hard to answer. They are a way of pointing to the rain's true creator and hence his graciousness. Of course the rain has no mother or father. Yet it exists and is a great blessing of which YHWH is creator. The question evokes awe and gratitude, not a feeling of stupidity.

God asks Job if he ever commanded the morning or informed the dawn star of its place (38,12). The answer is obvious: "Of course not; but you, God, have". The rhetorical question is a way of underscoring the fact that YHWH does manage the world, and Job knows it. The only answer to the question "Have you come to the stores of snow, or seen the stores of hail?" (38,22) is, "Of course not". But this is so obvious that no answer is called for. The real purpose of the question is implied in the relative clause, "which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war" (v. 23). Job is reminded that YHWH is a war god with hidden armories at his call. The enemies for whom the weapons are held in readiness are not specified, but surely Job is not among them, because no such weapons are needed to defeat him. Job sometimes imagined himself as God's enemy (10,17; 16,9-14; 19,10-12), but was certain that God was exaggerating Job's menace (7,12).

All the meteorological phenomena mentioned demonstrate God's skills in creation and management. Mankind, although not mentioned, is obviously among the beneficiaries. According to Tsevat, rain in the desert (38,25-27), is "wasted on land uninhabited and uninhabitable" and thus has no moral purpose¹⁵. Yet rain benefits not only desert animals but also humans, because the מרֶבֶר is grazing-land essential to the human economy¹⁶. To be sure, the verse says

¹⁴ TSEVAT, "Meaning", 86.

¹⁵ TSEVAT, "Meaning", 100.

¹⁶ As noted by CLINES, *Job 38-42*, 74.

“where no man is”, but the rain can change that. The rain falls on the desert “to satiate the waste and desolate land, to make grass sprout forth” (v. 27). Then animals can feed, herds can graze, and humans can prosper. This is exactly the sequence of events in Psalm 107, which first says that God dries up water sources and fertile land (vv. 33-34), but then,

He turns desert into a pool of water,
and parched land into sources of water,
and he makes the hungry dwell there,
and they establish an inhabited city.
And they sow fields and plant vineyards,
and these produce fruit of the harvest.
And he blesses them and they grow very numerous,
and he does not reduce their livestock (Ps 107,35-38).

The people in question here are the redeemed of Israel, but the phenomena are described as universal and recurrent. These people, if v. 39 is in place, are subsequently humbled, though it is not said why¹⁷. This psalm shows that rain in the desert is not considered irrelevant to human needs and wishes¹⁸.

In any case, it would be extremely egocentric of humans to expect that everything given to the world must benefit only them. We can compare how some near-contemporaries of the author interpreted rain in the desert. In Ps 104,10-11, provision of water to animals is listed among God’s blessings. Psalm 107 praises God for giving water (v. 9) and calls such acts “wonders” and “kindnesses” (107,8). The topos of water in the desert receives its most glorious expression in Isaiah 35. There, to be sure, the water explicitly serves a human purpose, namely to enable the returnees to survive the journey home. But the watering of the desert evokes a sheer delight that goes beyond the practical needs of the journey. Rain in the desert is a correlate of the

¹⁷ H.-J. KRAUS, *Psalms 60-150. A Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN 1989) 325, says that transposition of vv. 39 and 40 is absolutely necessary to restore a “senseless text”. The emendation is reasonable, though the mechanism of the transposition is not specified.

¹⁸ The author of Job draws on Psalm 107 in several places. Ps 107,40 = Job 12,21a + 24b; Ps 107,42a = Job 22,19a; Ps 107,42b = Job 5,16b. It is more likely that Job is taking phrases from the psalm and using them in various places than that the psalmist is drawing together phrases scattered in Job.

rebirth of the nation and the healing of the people, literally and metaphorically. The *topos* of water in the desert is always an expression of blessing and joy, not waste. It is wrong to isolate some items in Job's Theophany — in this case rain in the desert — and adduce them as evidence of a universe indifferent to man.

V. Creatures Great and Small

The tour of the animal world displays God's care for his creatures. Job's ignorance of the gazelle's gestation period (39,1-3) has no significance other than to remind him that God cares for the birthing of creatures far beyond human reach. It hardly demonstrates an absence of justice in the world that God cares for creatures that Job cannot even approach. God hunts on behalf of the lion (38,39-40) and prepares food for raven chicks (38,41) when they "cry out to God" — an image of God as father of all. Of course, the lions, ravens, and eagles (or vultures) (39,27-30) eat meat, for which other creatures must die. "The strong prey on the weak and conduct themselves with cruelty" ¹⁹. But this is not a vegetarian universe. God has arranged for the care of all creatures but not the elimination of pain, danger, and death. Providence protects the species, not the individual ²⁰.

God has set the wild ass free (39,5). Tsevat takes this to mean that this creature owes Job nothing and is beyond his ken and reach ²¹. This is true, but did Job think otherwise — or care? What is significant is that the wild ass does "owe" God, for he is its provider. That God *also* provides for wild animals does not show indifference to human needs. For Newsom, God's care for the wild ass, as well as the gazelle and mountain goats (39,1-4) is presented in terms of "an inversion of the values of human culture" because the city is the "locus of noise and oppression" ²². But it is not the biblical notion

¹⁹ E.L. GREENSTEIN, "The Problem of Evil in the Book of Job", *Mishneh Todah*. Studies in Deuteronomy and Its Cultural Environment in Honor of Jeffrey H. Tigay (eds. N.S. FOX et al.) (Winona Lake, IN 2009) 355.

²⁰ The belief in the providence of species in the animal kingdom is the Aristotelian view embraced by Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, III, 17, who rightly cites Pss 104,21; 145,16; and 147,9 in favor of it.

²¹ TSEVAT, "Meaning", 88.

²² C.A. NEWSOM, *The Book of Job*. A Contest of Moral Imaginations (New York 2003) 246.

that human culture is all that counts or that the city is the essence of civilization. Job would have to be extraordinarily self-centered were he to feel an abasement of human faculties in the description of God's providence for animals. In Gen 1,30, God's care for wild creatures is an expression of the world's goodness, and nothing indicates a radically different valuation here.

The ostrich (39,13-18) is an interesting case. Not only is she free of human control, she hardly controls herself. She is senseless, abandoning her eggs to chance and racing off erratically. For Greenstein, this shows divine cruelty²³. But there are ostriches. Someone cares for their young, and this can only be God, who takes over as guardian of the helpless²⁴. For Newsom, the celebration of the ostrich "seems unnervingly to place God in considerable sympathy with the emblems of the chaotic"²⁵. If that is so, the effect is only to tame the chaotic. Can anyone really be made uneasy by the ostrich's "anarchic joy", as Newsom so aptly puts it²⁶. On the contrary, the reader is invited to appreciate the flight to freedom of one of God's zanier creations.

When God asks, "Do you give the horse its might?" (39,19a), the answer is obviously "No, but you do". The point of the extended description of the horse (39,19-25) cannot be to expose human helplessness, since humans can and do control this beast, a fact that could only demonstrate a competence. Moreover, there is no mystery in the horse that might be thought to confound Job's wit. What is said about the horse is that he is mighty and glorious. This elicits awe at God's creative powers.

Likewise in Psalm 104 God gives drink and food to all the animals of the field, including the wild ass, the gazelle, and other animals that live beyond human control. Even predators are under God's care and thus they turn to him for nourishment (Ps 104,21). So frequent are the correlations between this psalm and Job 38-41, that the dependence of the latter on the former is likely. And the priority of the psalm is assured by its dependence on the Greater Hymn to the Aton²⁷.

²³ GREENSTEIN, "Problem of Evil", 355.

²⁴ In other words, God is for abandoned animals what he is for human orphans — their provider (Deut 10,18; Jer 49,11), "helper" (Ps 10,14), and "father" (Ps 68,6).

²⁵ NEWSOM, *Book of Job*, 247.

²⁶ NEWSOM, *Book of Job*, 247.

²⁷ The specificity of the parallels between Ps 104,20-30 and the Hymn to the

Psalm 104 and other psalms with descriptions of natural wonders and blessings, such as 19,1-7; 74,12-17; 147,8-11.16-17, show that all these natural phenomena can be, and were, adduced to show God's goodness. This is true even of the raven (Ps 147,9) and the lion who beg their food from God (Pss 147,9; 104,21). God is shown as the great huntsman (and scavenger) on behalf of carrion eaters. If God's giving predators their food elicits exclamations of exultation in Ps 104,21, there is no reason to suppose that the same deed in Job would show YHWH nurturing "an element of creation hostile to humans", as Newsom says²⁸. Psalm 19,2 epitomizes the idea that God's goodness is declared by the natural world. Of course this cannot be presumed to apply to the book of Job, but it is the assumption that readers can be expected to bring to the book, and nothing in God's words contradicts this assumption.

VI. Behemoth and Leviathan

In an effort to bring to the fore the chaos and danger thought to inhere in God's description of the cosmos, contemporary commentators have dramatized the evil of Behemoth and Leviathan. The beasts are described as "horridly terrifying creatures" and "uncontrollable, except to a limited degree by God"²⁹. But I doubt that the ancient reader would have been quite that distressed. After all, YHWH always defeats Leviathan, even when portrayed in its full-blown, primordial ferocity (Isa 27,1; Ps 74,14). One sign of the beast's dreadfulness, according to J.G. Williams, is the statement that Behemoth is the "first of God's works" (Job 40,19a). This supposedly displaces wisdom from the primogeniture it has in Prov

Aton and their shared sequence proves that the Hymn, or some derivative thereof, is one of the sources of the psalm. We must minimally assume indirect transmission of Atonist motifs and imagery. This is affirmed by A. KRÜGER, *Das Lob des Schöpfers*. Studien zu Sprache, Motivik und Theologie von Psalm 104 (WMANT 124; Neukirchen-Vluyn 2010), who rightly insists on the influences of other literary traditions as well (2-22 [with history of research], and 403-422 [with motif-historical analysis]). Still, the concentration of motifs from the Hymn in these eleven verses of Psalm 104 (with some shared motifs elsewhere) indicates a more specific literary connection than just diffusion of motifs.

²⁸ NEWSOM, *Book of Job*, 246.

²⁹ GREENSTEIN, "Problem of Evil", 355.

8,22³⁰. Williams assumes that the author knew Prov 8,22 and would have read Job 40,19a in this fashion. Williams finds this all the more disturbing insofar as “Behemoth is a primary symbol of the power of chaos, of destruction, and of thwarted relationships”³¹. Even if this is an accurate picture of Behemoth’s mythical background (and it does fairly describe the Egyptian God Seth), none of these traits come into view in this passage. As Newsom acutely observes, “[...] although God’s ability to overcome them [sc., Behemoth and Leviathan] is taken for granted, there is little or no reference to enmity or hostility between God and these creatures. Instead, God describes them with evident admiration”³².

Nevertheless Newsom finds these placid pictures unsettling, because “the uncomfortable sense grows that God’s identification with the chaotic is as strong as with symbols of order”³³. From the “relationship of congruence” between God and Leviathan (and Behemoth) “the nonmoral and nonrational aspects of deity are highlighted. Knowing Leviathan, one knows something of the monstrous that is its own reflection of the numinous, wholly otherness of God”³⁴. This might be so if Leviathan and Behemoth were portrayed as the embodiments and generators of chaos and evil, but the author has chosen not to import these associations into his depiction. These creatures may be anarchic — as wild animals are by nature — but they are God’s creations and under his control (40,15; 41,3; cf. Ps 104,26).

If God’s pleasure in Leviathan is “identification”, then God can be said to “identify” with the sea monsters that he calls “good” in Gen 1,21. But no one would read that verse to mean that God stands on the side of chaos in opposition to the ordered world he is creating. And it is overly dramatic to say, as A. Brenner does, that in describing the two beasts “God here reveals himself as he is never revealed elsewhere” for the beasts must originate from God’s “dark side, the one that generates evil” and is thus “part of the Godhead”³⁵. But even if the beasts were, in their mythological origins, from “the dark side”,

³⁰ J.G. WILLIAMS, “You Have Not Spoken Truth of Me: Mystery and Irony in Job”, *ZAW* 83 (1971) 246.

³¹ WILLIAMS, “You Have Not Spoken”, 246.

³² NEWSOM, *Book of Job*, 249.

³³ NEWSOM, *Book of Job*, 252.

³⁴ NEWSOM, *Book of Job*, 252.

³⁵ A. BRENNER, “God’s Answer to Job”, *VT* 31 (1981) 134.

they are nevertheless no more disruptive to an orderly worldview than Deutero-Isaiah's insistence that God creates light and darkness, well-being and evil (Isa 45,7). Lest you think it might be, Deutero-Isaiah soon insists that God did not create the world as chaos (45,18).

Leviathan is not said to do anything destructive or even hostile. Behemoth was created like Job (40,15)³⁶, implying affinity not enmity. These beasts were presumably created before humans (thus in Gen 1,21, and perhaps implied in Job 40,19a), but their precedence in creation does not show the world to be chaotic and disorderly. Sea serpents come before humans in Genesis 1, but that account is unquestionably describing a realm of order and goodness. The same is true of Ben Sira's description of the frightful powers in creation (including sea monsters), which culminates in a call to praise God in awe and wonder (Sir 43,28-33).

Behemoth is based on the hippopotamus³⁷. The only inaccuracies are the huge size of his tail (40,17)³⁸, and the notions that the produce of the mountains comes to it³⁹. These inaccuracies may have come from a traveler, who would, after all, not get too close to the strange beast. For the Egyptians, the hippopotamus was the embodiment of Seth, who represented chaos, and he was annually defeated by Pharaoh, the Living Horus. There is no evidence that this myth was known in Israel, but perhaps it too was brought by a traveler⁴⁰. This mythic background would explain Behemoth's pairing with Leviathan. In any case, what is significant is not Behemoth's mythic origins but the fact that he too has been naturalized and tamed, so much so that all he does is stand in the river and graze imperturbably. He is explicitly a herbivore (40,15b). The beast portrayed in Job does not fight. We learn that "his maker" — alone — can "bring his sword near" (40,19b)⁴¹. It is unclear

³⁶ HALOT 839.2.2b.

³⁷ This is the consensus; see the survey and discussion in CLINES, *Job* 38-42, 148-157.

³⁸ Herodotus (*History*, 2.71) and Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliotheca historica*, VIII 95) made the same error, though both had visited Egypt.

³⁹ Unless we emend הרים to נהרים. See CLINES, *Job* 38-42, 117.

⁴⁰ Behemoth is identified as Seth by E. RUPRECHT, "Das Nilpferd im Hiob-buch", *VT* 21 (1971) 209-231, and O. KEEL, *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob. Eine Deutung von Ijob 38-41 vor dem Hintergrund der zeitgenössischen Bildkunst* (Göttingen 1978) 127-141.

⁴¹ The emphasis on "his maker" is supported by the frontal positioning of the subject. We should emend העשו אל to עשו: אלה: to eliminate the ungrammatical article of העשו.

whether humans can capture him with hooks, for though 40,24 is formulated as an indicative it may be an unmarked rhetorical question meaning that Behemoth cannot be captured even by hooks in his nose and eyes. (Hippopotami were in fact hunted in Egypt, but the author may not have known this.) In any case, the hippopotamus is most definitely a formidable beast.

Though Leviathan is usually thought to be a crocodile ⁴², the picture of Leviathan is, I have argued ⁴³, based on whales, or perhaps whales conflated with schools of dolphins. Whales could be known from reports of seafarers, — “those who go down to the sea” as they are called in Ps 107,23, and who are said to tell God’s wonders (v. 24). Ben Sira (43,24-25) likewise speaks of “those who go down to the sea” and tell of its wonders, namely God’s amazing creatures and “the power of Rahab”.

I do not say that Leviathan in Job *is* a whale, but that this depiction is based on one. Leviathan was a sea monster who could be imagined variously from features of actual animals, such as a serpent’s coiling ⁴⁴. And contrary to a common notion, whales are to be found in the Mediterranean ⁴⁵. The whale, not the crocodile, “sneezes”, ejecting a spout that can be said to glow when the sun shines through it (41,10a) and be pictured as smoke or steam (41,12). And the whale, not the crocodile, stirs up the depths and makes the abyss seem to boil (41,23) by leaping and crashing back into the water, and thereby leaving behind a white wake (נִחִיב) (41,24).

⁴² See CLINES, *Job* 38-42, 155-156. The biblical authors pictured Leviathan in various ways. In Isa 27,1, Leviathan is called a “swift serpent”; thus too in Job 26,13. But this epithet cannot possibly fit the Leviathan in Job 41. Nor is Leviathan in Job 41 compatible with the monster of multiple heads (Ps 74,14; KTU 1.5.I.3). Though a crocodile might be called a serpent, it could not have been more than vaguely the model for the mythical Leviathan, who was a deep-sea creature.

⁴³ FOX, “Behemoth and Leviathan”, 264-266.

⁴⁴ Until modern times, whales were often depicted in fantastic and monstrous guises; see the references in my “Behemoth and Leviathan”, 265. In any case, the distinction between real and mythological animals is a modern one. The creatures mentioned in Isa 13,21 and 34,14 include both real animals and demons, all of them assumed to actually reside in the desert.

⁴⁵ These include the fin whale and the sperm whale. See P.G.H. EVANS, *The Natural History of Whales & Dolphins* (London 1987) 60-69; 93-94, and further references in FOX, “Behemoth and Leviathan”.

Leviathan is a whale (possibly conflated with dolphins) in Ps 104,26, שָׁם אֲנִיּוֹת יִהְיוּ לִיָּתָן וְהַיָּצֵרֶת לְשִׁחָקָבּוּ. By word-play, this means both “There [in the great sea] ships travel, (and) Leviathan (לִיָּתָן), which you created to play with”, and “There ships travel, (and) their escort (לִיָּתָן), which you created to play therein”. Pods of whales and dolphins do indeed “escort” ships. In Psalm 104, Leviathan is one of God’s playful creatures, neither particularly monstrous nor a threat to civilization. In Job’s Theophany, humans cannot defeat him (40,25-32; perhaps 41,1-6), but who would try? Of course a whale seen up-close can be frightening, by virtue of its size if nothing else, but it rarely imperils humans, except when they stick harpoons in it.

Leviathan in Ugaritic and Hebrew mythology was a primordial monster who was among Baal’s, then YHWH’s, enemies. Perhaps Behemoth was originally of the same sort. Nevertheless, the Theophany lacks any hint of a creation battle or even of any particular hostility between YHWH and these creatures. They have been controlled and naturalized. To the author, they are majestic, powerful creatures, like the warhorse (Job 39,19-25)⁴⁶.

VII. Questions ⁴⁷

Rhetorical questions set the tone of the Theophany. If God praised himself in the indicative, he would be merely boasting of powers that Job never denied. If he had said, “I created the earth. I set its measurements. I hung it on nothingness. I always command the morning. I show the light and darkness to their places”, and so on, the tone (however justified the claims) would be tediously boastful. Instead, God uses rhetorical questions that elicit knowledge from Job and the reader, thereby making them participants in the depiction ⁴⁸. The

⁴⁶ J. LÉVÊQUE, “L’interprétation des discours de YHWH (Job 38,1–42,6)”, *The Book of Job* (ed. W.A.M. BEUKEN) (Leuven 1994) 203-223, at 213, 216, likewise sees a diminution in the violence and hostility of these creatures.

⁴⁷ See further FOX, “Job 38”.

⁴⁸ See also L.J. DE REGT, “Implications of Rhetorical Questions in Strophes in Job 11 and 15”, *The Book of Job* (ed. W.A.M. BEUKEN) (Leuven 1994) 321. De Regt notes that, “[b]ecause the speaker implies more than the words as such and expects no response, the hearer is impressed by the thought processes that would logically lead to the kind of answer the speaker intends the hearer to reach”.

questions create a community of knowledge — there is much that Job does not know, but there is also much within his grasp: potential knowledge he can activate by looking at the world around him and seeing evidence of God's power and providence. It is this knowledge rather than any humiliation that elicits Job's repentance. The questions are no more hectoring or humiliating than the very similar rhetorical questions in Proverbs (30,4) and Deutero-Isaiah (40,12-14; 41,2.4.26) ⁴⁹.

Only three of the questions in Job 38–42 are genuine interrogatives that require the answer, "I don't know". In 38,19 God asks, "What is the way to where the light dwells? And darkness — where is its place?" Here too the question is really directed to the issue of power and maintenance of the world, as the continuation of the sentence shows: "[...] so that you could take it to its territory, show (it) the path to its house" (38,20). The question in 38,24, "What is the path where the light is distributed, where the east wind spreads out on the earth?" is an actual interrogative calling for information that Job cannot provide. The question about the gazelle's gestation period (39,1-3) is truly unanswerable — for Job. We now know that the answer is six months, but that knowledge does not change the real issue, which is God's care for creatures far beyond human reach.

VIII. Psalm 104

The affinities between Psalm 104 and Job 38–40, some of which are mentioned above, are well known. Still, the significance of this resemblance has not been adequately explored. The psalm depicts "a harmonious place in which the spheres of human and animal coexist as complementary creations" ⁵⁰. If Job's Theophany is to be read as

⁴⁹ Many of the questions begin with imperfects, which can be translated with either "can" or "do", e.g., *הֲתִקְשֹׁר מַעֲרֵנֹת כִּימָה*, "Can you bind the bonds of the Bear?" or "Do you bind the bonds of the Bear?" (38,31). Both renderings point out that Job cannot and (therefore) does not do these things, but there is a difference in emphasis. The former translation has the questions emphasizing Job's inability to do these things; the latter underscores the fact that it is not he who does them. The many questions that begin with perfects (e.g. 38,12; 39,1) emphasize facticity rather than ability. God of course points out his own ability to maintain the world, but the greater emphasis is placed on the fact that it is he who does it. The latter is also the emphasis of the "who" questions.

⁵⁰ NEWSOM, *Book of Job*, 245.

making the opposite point, it must be distanced from the psalm. Newsom devotes more attention to this problem than most commentators do. She notes three features of the Theophany which distinguish it from the psalm: “[1] the suppression of descriptions of human activity, [2] the explicit opposition between animals and human purposes, and [3] repeated references to God’s provision for these creatures”⁵¹. The following are my responses.

(1) The deliberate omission of human activity cannot be intended to show that God treats humans differently or that his providence does not extend to them. Certainly we are not meant to understand that humans alone are not cared for. It is hardly the case that humans alone inevitably starve or fail to bear infants and feed their young. God is painting a picture which Job is invited to extend to mankind, as happens also in Psalm 107 and similar hymns.

(2) The opposition between animal and human purposes is of little consequence to humans. How many people *want* to harness a wild buffalo or corral the wild ass or catch an ostrich? To do so is not a human purpose, any more than Job’s inability to bind the Pleiades (38,31) implies that humans wish to do this. These are all simply examples of things that Job cannot do. Besides, much of what God describes does serve human purposes, such as his creating a world, holding back the sea, and bringing rain.

(3) When God says that he provides for animals he does not mean that he fails to provide for humans. But it is true that this is not explicit, and the question is why. The first reason is that for God to list the blessings he bestows on mankind would look like an attempt to ingratiate himself with Job: I gave you this and I gave you that, so why don’t you trust me? This would diminish God’s dignity, which God himself certainly takes seriously. Second, there is the touchy issue of what became of these blessings in the case of Job. God gave great things to the species, but he snatched them away from this individual. Third, God wants Job to draw his own conclusions. That is why much of the description is in the form of rhetorical questions.

Newsom believes that the cluster of the three distinctions she observes between the Theophany and Psalm 104 “destabilizes the customary binary oppositions of order and the chaotic, culture and nature,

⁵¹ NEWSOM, *Book of Job*, 245 (Numbers added).

blessed and godforsaken” and associate God with the creatures of “the fearful beyond”⁵². Yet few of the creatures in the Theophany are frightening, and as for those that are, such as the lion, God is “associated” with them in Ps 104,21 and elsewhere. In the Theophany, the threat posed by Behemoth and Leviathan has been deliberately toned down. In fact, the Theophany does the opposite of what Newsom says. It describes much order and little chaos, and it claims that blessing is found even well outside civilization, not that it is absent within it. The three features of the Theophany that Newsom lists in no way show its worldview to be incompatible with that of Psalm 104.

God does describe a moral order, even without addressing the question of justice directly. The creation and maintenance of a beautiful and well-functioning universe *is* a moral act, one whose traces Job can see, just as we can see the traces of the Big Bang in microwave radiation. An Egyptian, I think, would have understood this moral order as Ma’at, which is both a well-ordered cosmos and a moral order, one in which aesthetics testify to ethics.

IX. The Theophany

The world God describes is good, and (by extension) mankind is well provided for, but what about justice? First of all, nothing God says implies the absence of retribution. In fact, YHWH does say that the wicked are punished. The result clause in 38,13 shows why God summons the dawn: “so as to seize the skirts of the earth, that the wicked may be shaken out of it”. Verse 14 is unclear, but the result in v. 15 is “that light be withheld from the wicked and the arrogant arm be broken”. Since v. 13 is something that YHWH actually and regularly does, the result clause too must mark an actual deed. Also, in 40,9-13 YHWH challenges Job to punish the wicked. According to Tsevat, “God and Job know that he [Job] cannot possibly do these things; it is not in the plan, not in the plan for the wicked to be punished”⁵³. But this reading runs contrary to the logic of the other rhetorical challenges, which adduce acts that Job does not do but that God can and usually does perform⁵⁴. And since God can and does command the

⁵² NEWSOM, *Book of Job*, 245.

⁵³ TSEVAT, “Meaning”, 99.

⁵⁴ The exception is Job 40,25-31, where the questions do refer to something

morning, he can do and does what the result clauses say. God's challenge to Job to trample down the wicked (40,12-13) likewise implies that God can do this, not that he too is helpless. In any case, if God is saying that he cannot defeat the wicked, he is presenting a form of theodicy that is not considered in Job or elsewhere in the Bible: the excuse of divine finitude. If, as Brenner says, the Theodicy demonstrates "the pained inability of God to control evil"⁵⁵, the book would be an apology for divine failure. But that would empty the book of meaning. The Prologue assumes that God has the option of not afflicting Job, and Job's complaints assume that God could do better. Moreover, God's descriptions of his rule prove, as Job says in 42,2, that God "can do everything".

God says nothing about rewarding the righteous. There is a false symmetry between the two sides of the retribution equation, for it could be the case that God punishes the wicked yet sometimes refuses to give the righteous their due. This is, in fact, presumed in the Prologue. On the one hand, the Adversary is going around looking for the wicked to report to the divine judge, and on the other, Job is unfairly afflicted. In the Theophany, God affirms the first assertion of the equation, but does so almost *en passant*. The punishment of the wicked is not the concern of this book. Still, God's beneficence toward his creatures somehow implies his punishment of the wicked. Psalm 104 ends, "Sinners will disappear from the earth, and the wicked be no more. O my soul, bless the Lord. Praise the Lord" (v. 35). A connection of this sort seems to be in the background of the Theophany speeches, but it is not emphasized.

that Job cannot do — defeat Leviathan — without implying that YHWH actually did or does them. This passage does not allude to the defeat of Leviathan at creation. The subjugation of Leviathan here is described by an array of incompatible images: being caught by barbs and harpoons, with his carcass sold in the market, being forced into indentured servitude, and being tamed and toyed with like a pet bird on a leash. The mythological Leviathan is killed by blows from a club, and the other images in this passage are also clearly irrelevant to him.

⁵⁵ BRENNER, "God's Answer", 134.

X. Job's Repentance

To God's description of the order and providence in his world different responses are possible. Job might, as Gordis suggests, find ease for his pain in the harmony of the cosmos ⁵⁶. In a sentence often cited just to be brushed aside, Gordis says, "The beauty of the world becomes an anodyne to man's suffering — and the key to truth" ⁵⁷. In fact, Job now has the additional discomfort of being chastised for speaking in ignorance. Or he might feel even worse, seeing himself cruelly isolated from the world's beauty and God's care ⁵⁸. He could continue raging, for he has nothing left to lose. But then he repents, in 42,6.

But why? After all, Job is the wronged party. (YHWH says as much in 2,3.) In 40,4 Job prepares the way for his repentance by saying he will keep silent, an act that typically signifies humility and patience, as in the psalms ⁵⁹. In 42,2-5, he declares God's omnipotence and his own ignorance. His recognition of these traits, which he had long known, is the sort of confession whereby one takes to heart something he already knew. The profession of God's omnipotence is especially significant, because he may do things of importance beyond what is visible. This the reader knows to be true. Nevertheless, Job's words on his way to repentance are often dismissed as evasive or facetious and as merely the muttered resignation of the helpless. Job's repentance comes to a climax in his declaration: *על כן אמואם ונחמתי על-עפר ואפר* (42,6).

Its meaning at least seems clear: "Therefore I am disgusted, and I repent on dust and ashes". If Job's words were spoken by a psalmist, no one would doubt that they express contrition. Still, the current consensus holds that Job's repentance is cagy and contrived, not really contrite.

⁵⁶ R. GORDIS, *The Book of God and Man* (Chicago, IL 1965) 133. Gordis states, in italics, the author's basic conclusion: "*just as there is order and harmony in the natural world, though imperfectly grasped by man, so there is order and meaning in the moral sphere, though often incomprehensible to man*" (133).

⁵⁷ GORDIS, *Book of God and Man*, 133.

⁵⁸ Those who think that *נחמתי* means "I am comforted" do not say that Job is comforted by the beauty he has seen; that would make no sense with "on dust and ashes".

⁵⁹ E.g., Pss 4,5; 32,3; 37,7; 38,14; 39,3.10; 50,21; 62,2.6; 131,2; cf. Isa 53,7. But silence can also be tactical, as in Judg 18,19 and Prov 17,20. On Job's silence, see NEWELL, "Job", 307-310.

A radical reinterpretation of this verse was proposed by J.B. Curtis, who translates: "Therefore, I feel loathing, contempt and revulsion [toward you, O God], and I am sorry for frail man" ⁶⁰. Other interpreters imbue the verse with a hostile intention ironically hidden beneath the superficial penitence ⁶¹. Many have followed this approach, with variations, and there is a strong consensus that Job does not actually show contrition ⁶².

The correct translation of 42,6 is the one most common (with variations) among the interpreters until recently: "Therefore I am disgusted and repent / on dust and ashes". This translation is philologically unproblematic:

- **נאס** is one of a number of verbs that are both transitive and intransitive ⁶³. To be sure, even without a syntactic direct object, verbs of emotion have a contextual object, something at which the emotion is directed. In the present case, what Job feels disgust at is himself (LXX ἐφάυλισα ἑμαυτόν) or, more specifically, his words (thus Ibn Ezra), for he has spoken in a way he regrets, namely without knowledge.
- **נחם** in the *niphal* certainly can mean "repent", "change one's mind". (God is usually the subject in this sense, but humans are the subject in Exod 13,17 and Jer 8,6). Although **נחם על** can mean "be comforted for", **על** is here serving as a preposition of location — not "for" but, literally, "on".
- **על-עפר ואפר**. As indicated by the Masoretic dichotomy after the second verb, the action of both verbs takes place "on dust and ashes" which is where Job is sitting. This is the place where the wretched sit in Sir 40,3 and this is certainly the most natural construal in Esth 4,3 and Isa 58,5, which refer to acts of repentance, not mourning. "Dust and ashes" is at the same time an objective correlative of Job's condition. The phrase, when Abraham (Gen 18,27) and Job (30,19b) use it of themselves, does not mean wretchedness but connotes it.

⁶⁰ CURTIS, "On Job's Response", 505.

⁶¹ K. FULLERTON, "The Original Conclusion to the Book of Job", *ZAW* 42 (1924) 125, achieves the same effect as the ironic reading by the older exponent of eliminating 42,1-6 as a later gloss. Verse 6 does, he says, express repentance, but if Job were really to speak 42,1-6, "He would humble himself before power and would therefore be untrue to himself".

⁶² An exception is NEWELL, "Job", 315, who argues that Job is contrite for his verbal overreaching and speaking without understanding".

⁶³ E.g. **נאס**, **נחם**, **נחם על**, **נחם**, **נחם**.

Nor is it an epithet of humanity, as if you could say “dust and ashes” and everyone would know that you are alluding to humans. Nor does it refer to symbols of mourning for his children, as Clines proposes ⁶⁴ (similarly the Targum). One would not “be consoled” for mourning or its symbols, but only for the loss itself ⁶⁵.

Apart from the philological unlikelihood of Curtis’s parsing and its variants, I find it peculiar that the proud, outspoken Job, who was convinced that God demanded honesty, would suddenly become shifty and evasive, whether by concealing his real meaning beneath an acceptable one, or by speaking “tongue-in-cheek” ⁶⁶. Either way he would be lying. Nor does it help matters if we assert, with Clines, that Job’s reply (however translated) was “not insincere; but it is a crafty and subtle speech that means more than it says” ⁶⁷. If so, it means less than it says, for God is not supposed to extract its full meaning. It is still evasive and more craven than straightforward repentance would be ⁶⁸.

⁶⁴ CLINES, *Job 38-42*, 175.

⁶⁵ When עָלָם נָחַם means “be comforted for”, the indirect object is not the mourning itself but a deceased person (2 Sam 13,39; Jer 16,7) or a personified city (Jer 31,15; Ezek 14,22; 32,31) or (in the *piel*) the misfortune itself (Job 42,11). With humans as the subject, נָחַם means “repent”, “show contrition” (Jer 8,6 and 31,19). With God as the subject, it means “change [his] mind” (Gen 6,6-7; Exod 32,12.14; Judg 2,18, and often). This is usually, and correctly, translated “repent” or “regret”, for while God would not be said to feel contrition for a misdeed, he does change his mind and regret earlier decisions.

⁶⁶ As ROBERTSON, “Book of Job”, 466, puts it.

⁶⁷ CLINES, *Job 38-42*, 177.

⁶⁸ According to ROBERTSON, “Book of Job”, 466, Job’s ironic confession shows that he has been forced “to entreat his opponent; in order to calm God’s whirlwinds he has to declare his guilt by his own mouth”. In fact, Job in no way “entreats” God, nor is he terrified by the whirlwind, which is a concomitant of Theophany (Ezek 1,4; Nah 1,3; Zech 9,14, etc.) and, in that setting, not devastating to its recipients. Tsevat does not find 42,6 problematic. Job, it seems, is repenting of his misconception that the world is run by retribution (TSEVAT, “Meaning”, 93, 100). But Job’s contrition seems exaggerated if it is merely for his having shared the nearly universal belief in divine morality. W.S. MORROW, “Consolation, Rejection, and Repentance in Job 42,6”, *JBL* 105 (1986) 225, examines three different and incompatible interpretations of 42,6 and decides that since none can be disproved, all are intended. The author, he concludes, “created a situation that can be interpreted in several ways according to the theological inclinations of the reader. The vague and ambiguous language of 42,6 is a re-

If Job's real intention were the concealed one and God understood it, it was strangely tolerant of him to declare Job right and to agree that he himself was unfair just on the basis of one double entendre. If God missed this intention, then he has not "been had" in a grand irony in which he unwittingly admits that he is a "chaotic, capricious, jealous Tyrant"⁶⁹. There is no "terrible self-incrimination"⁷⁰. God has merely failed to catch a bad pun.

Job is genuinely repenting — not of any sin that might have justified the calamity, but of having spoken in ignorance — as God rebukes him for doing (38,2)⁷¹. His ignorance was not a sin, but it was arrogant. Whatever else the Theophany means, it certainly seeks to induce humility, and it is no surprise that it has this effect on Job⁷². Not all readers are affected that way, but that does not mean that Job was not.

It is true, as often noted, that God's answer to Job is not quite satisfactory. It does not address Job's complaints or explain his suffering. But if it did, the book would not be relevant to others who do not receive a theophany to address their case. Hence God points out facts that Job (and anyone else who shares his cultural assumptions) can see or know, namely God's powers in creation and providence. It must be said that many religious sufferers do just that: they see a meaningful order in the world and when that seems violated they allow themselves to trust God's wisdom even when it is not manifest.

Still, Job's complaints and demands are not satisfactorily answered. He will never know why he has suffered, and he may remain dissatisfied. This is, after all, the common lot. But this must

flection of this intention". I find it doubtful that the author took the readers this far merely to offer a list of possibilities (why just three?) from which they can select whichever fits their preconceptions. Morrow is conflating exegetical uncertainty with literary indeterminism.

⁶⁹ WILLIAMS, "You Have Not Spoken Truth of Me", 247.

⁷⁰ ROBERTSON, "Book of Job", 468.

⁷¹ Thus LÉVÊQUE, *Job*, 154, 247. Lévêque observes that "Job n'a pas transgressé des préceptes, mais les limites de sa finitude" (271).

⁷² By God's questioning, "[l]'hybris s'est changée en audace de la foi, mais de cette mutation YHWH a été l'artisan, par une grâce de révélation analogue à celle qu'il réserve à ses grands serviteurs" (LÉVÊQUE, "L'interprétation", with reference to Exod 19,19 and Ezek 1,4). This interesting comparison reminds us that Job is YHWH's servant (1,9; 2,3; 42,7) and that what he received *is* prophetic revelation. Job's vision consisted of facts available to anyone, but this is true of much of prophecy.

be the way things are, by the book's presuppositions. For only in the absence of full knowledge of God's intentions, and only in the awareness that some of his ways are unjust, is it possible to fear God gratuitously and to disprove the Adversary's insinuation that this is humanly impossible (1,9).

XI. The Reader

The book of Job is not for Job; it is for its readers. Readers, who observe Job's world from above, and who, unlike Job, have read the Prologue, are allowed a privileged, superior perspective and are even given insight into the mind of God.

The Prologue lays down the book's presuppositions. One of them is that God wants human fidelity, not only their obedience but also their unconditional faith in his goodness. God's desire for human fidelity suggests a deep need, for he is willing to abandon justice in some cases to make this possible. It is not necessary that justice be absent from the world in order for faith to be unconditional; it is enough that execution of justice not be certain. The possibility of injustice can also be a comfort to sufferers, for they can know that their pain is not proof of guilt. The lament psalmists do this ⁷³, Jeremiah does this (15,15-18; 20,14-18), the author of *Ludhul* does this, and Job does as well (13,6.16; 19,26; and above all, 31,6, in which he is convinced that God judges justly when he judges) ⁷⁴. To be sure, Job's professions of faith stand uneasily alongside his accusations of God and his expressions of despair. Job is inconsistent, but so is God ⁷⁵.

⁷³ This is the meaning of human silence in the psalms, including complaint psalms: not a confession of guilt, but a complaint about suffering together with confidence that God will save them. Examples are Pss 38,14; 39,3; 50,21; 62,6; 131,2. There are sharp differences between Job and the psalmists, of course, notably in the psalmists' expression of hope and trust in God's eventual goodness. Still, Job's silence in 40,4-5 may connote, or at least allow for, a measure of hope, since he has been reminded of God's care for his creatures.

⁷⁴ See also NEWSOM's *Book of Job*, 183-199, fine description of the "working rhetorical world" into which Job invites the reader in chapters 29-31. She observes that "[a]gain and again, Job warrants his own behavior in relation to the expectations and judgments of God, who is the source and sustainer of this moral world" (196).

⁷⁵ Job's inconsistency is matched by Jeremiah's. Jeremiah has accurately

None of this is to say that this resolution is satisfactory, only that it is the one the Book of Job offers. Faith, though often held in esteem as a value in itself, is only as admirable as its object, and many readers have wondered whether the God of Job has earned such trust. Some readers have found Job's submission unsatisfactory, because it is not really warranted ⁷⁶. Though it is true that he spoke in ignorance, he still had full knowledge in the most relevant matters: his own suffering and his innocence. But whether Job should have repented or not, that is what he does. He is as his author made him.

Job and his friends agreed on human wretchedness, but they were, ironically, wrong. Humans have in their power the ability to give God something he deeply desires: unbought human loyalty, a stance of unconditional faith, even in the face of divine injustice. It may be, as Eliphaz says, that God does not place trust even in his angels (4,18; 15,15), but he *does* trust humans. He has no choice.

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SUMMARY

The current understanding of the Book of Job, put forth by M. Tsevat in 1966 and widely accepted, is that YHWH implicitly denies the existence of divine justice. Retribution is not part of reality, but only a delusion. The present article argues that the book teaches the need for fidelity in the face of divine injustice. The Theophany shows a God whose care for the world of nature hints at his care for humans. The reader, unlike Job, knows that Job's suffering is important to God, as establishing the possibility of true human loyalty.

been called "a polyphonic response to suffering" (Louis STULMAN, "Jeremiah as a Polyphonic Response to Suffering", *Inspired Speech* [London 2004] 302-318). This response which puts forward three dissonant strategies for interpreting Jerusalem's suffering: moral order amid the chaos; Jeremiah's suffering and moral chaos; and divine silence and divine absence. The Book of Job has deep affinities to these strategies, and not only to the second.

⁷⁶ See above, notes 60, 61.

The Tears of God in the Book of Jeremiah

Jeremiah has long been known as “the weeping prophet”. It is not clear how this moniker came to be, although it might be connected to several passages in the book (Jer 8,23; 9,17; 13,17; 14,17). The substance of the title may be as early as LXX Lamentations, in which Jeremiah is depicted as sitting and weeping as he composed the laments contained in the book ¹. Whatever the origin of Jeremiah’s identity as “the weeping prophet”, crying appears as a frequent motif within the book of Jeremiah, although Jeremiah is not always the one weeping. Indeed, YHWH weeps more often than Jeremiah does, and even Jeremiah’s tears embody the tears of YHWH. Many commentators, however, do not recognize the weeping of YHWH in Jeremiah evidently because they assume that God does not experience emotion and that Scripture should cohere with this assumption. The present essay will argue that Jeremiah speaks of YHWH weeping and that this book is not about “the weeping prophet”, but “the weeping God”. The motif of weeping in Jeremiah has never been a topic of previous study, and weeping in the OT generally has not attracted much attention ². The present work will analyze divine weeping in Jeremiah and examine the function of divine weeping within the book by correlating the text with modern scientific study of weeping.

¹ M.C. CALLAWAY, “The Lamenting Prophet and the Modern Self: On the Origin of Contemporary Readings of Jeremiah”, *Inspired Speech*. Prophecy in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Herbert B. Huffmon (ed. L. STULMAN) (London 2004) 48-62, here 51.

² The major exceptions are T. COLLINS, “The Physiology of Tears in the Old Testament: Part I” and “Part II”, *CBQ* 33 (1971) 18-38 and 185-97; G.A. ANDERSON, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance*. The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion (University Park, PA 1991); M.I. GRUBER, *Aspects of Nonverbal Communication in the Ancient Near East* (Studia Pohl 12.1-2; Rome 1980) I, 384-400 and II, 402-434.

I. Weeping in the Old Testament

Weeping may be understood in the context of attachment theory, which describes how infants and their caregivers form reciprocal bonds³. This context clarifies that weeping is a social rather than individual behavior; tears are meant to be seen by others. The attachment behavioral system has been observed in many animal species, but weeping is unique to humans. Although other animals shed tears due to irritation of the eye, only humans cry for emotional reasons. Throughout the lifespan, human weeping communicates serious distress and corresponding need for care-giving and relationship. The desired response to tears is empathy and support (Exod 2,6; 2 Kgs 20,5; 22,19; Ps 6,9). Attachment theory has been expanded from the parent-child bond to encompass romantic relationships and relationship to the divine⁴. Prayers frequently manifest the dynamics of attachment relationships. For example, prayers often express a desire for proximity to the parent-like deity (Ps 42,1-2), who provides a sense of security (Ps 23,4) through superior power and wisdom (Ps 23,3; 93,1). In distress, the deity offers help (Ps 69,1), and divine absence provokes anxiety (Ps 22,1). Weeping enters into this relationship when people at prayer hope that tears may motivate divine aid (Ps 6,9.9; 39,13; 102,10). Attachment theory can illuminate human religious behavior, but Jeremiah draws on the parent-child bond to illuminate divine behavior and emotion. YHWH faces the prospect of losing “my firstborn son” (Jer 31,9; cf. Exod 4,22) and witnessing the agony of the people suffering the harsh realities of military defeat and national calamity (see Lamentations). However, YHWH does not only suffer the pain of Israel and the loss of relationship, but is also the agent of the destruction of

³ On attachment theory in general, see J. BOWLBY, *Attachment and Loss*. 3 vols. (New York 1969-1973). For recent developments, see *Attachment and Bonding. A New Synthesis* (eds. C.S. CARTER et al.) (Cambridge, MA 2005); J. CASSIDY – P.R. SHAVER (eds.), *Handbook of Attachment. Theory, Research, and Clinical Applications* (New York 2008). On weeping and attachment theory, see J.K. NELSON, *Seeing through Tears. Crying and Attachment* (New York 2005); K. GROSSMANN, “Weinen, ein Bindungsverhalten”, *Psychotherapeut* 54 (2009) 77-89.

⁴ L.A. KIRKPATRICK, *Attachment, Evolution, and the Psychology of Religion* (New York 2005); P. GRANQVIST, “Religion as Attachment: The Godin Award Lecture”, *Archive for the Psychology of Religion* 32 (2010) 49-59.

Israel. Israel's infidelity turns YHWH's love to anger, and YHWH punishes Israel.

The claim that God's love and anger give rise to God's pain was developed by the Japanese theologian K. Kitamori with extensive reference to Jeremiah ⁵. Although he did not discuss divine weeping, he devotes considerable attention to Jer 31,20, which reflects an emotional dynamic at work in the texts of weeping: "Is Ephraim not my precious son, the child in whom I delight? Even though I continue to speak against him, yet I remember him still. Therefore my belly roars for him, I must show him compassion" ⁶. This text explicitly identifies the community as YHWH's son whom YHWH both loves and punishes. This combination of love and anger is painful. As I will show below, YHWH's weeping derives from YHWH's love for Israel and YHWH's punishment of Israel. Thus, Kitamori's analysis appears coherent with the portrait of YHWH in Jeremiah. Kitamori's work participates in a much larger theological trend in which the traditional "impassibility" (*apatheia*) of God gives way to the *pathos* of God. Christian tradition affirms the *apatheia* of the divine, meaning that God can not be affected by something else or suffer in the broad sense, including experiencing emotion (*pathos*). Since the late nineteenth century, many theologians have argued that God does suffer and experience emotions ⁷. The language of YHWH weeping in Jeremiah may or may not contribute to this broader discussion, but the impassibility of God, I argue, has already led many scholars to misread several passages in Jeremiah and continue a long tradition of identifying Jeremiah as "the weeping prophet" rather than seeing that the tears in Jere-

⁵ K. KITAMORI, *Theology of the Pain of God* (trans. M. E. BRATCHER) (Richmond, VA 1965).

⁶ KITAMORI (*Theology of the Pain of God*) refers to this verse at the beginning of his book and frequently thereafter. He also devotes an appendix to discussion of Jer 31,20 and Isa 63,15 (151-167).

⁷ For the state of the question as of the mid-1980s, see R. BAUKMAN, "'Only the Suffering God Can Help': Divine Passibility in Modern Theology", *Themelios* 9.3 (1984) 6-12; R. GOETZ, "The Suffering God: The Rise of a New Orthodoxy", *Christian Century* 103 (1986) 385-389; H. URS VON BALTHASAR, *Theo-Drama, Vol. 5: The Last Act* (trans. G. HARRISON) (San Francisco, CA 1998). For more recent discussion, see D. CASTELO, "Continued Grappling: The Divine Impassibility Debates Today", *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 12 (2010) 364-372.

miah indicate a weeping deity. I will return to the theological discussion and its impact on the interpretation of Jeremiah at the end of this essay, but first I will examine the frequently denied presence of divine tears in Jeremiah. I will argue that these texts have been misread, most likely due to theological convictions.

II. Weeping Deity in the Book of Jeremiah and in Ancient Near East

The grief and lament heard early in the book (3,21; 4,19; 6,26; 7,29) achieve their height in “the weeping poems” (Jeremiah 8–9). K. O’Connor identifies Jer 8,23–9,10 as “the weeping poems”, although she includes 9,16–21 in her discussion⁸. Elsewhere, she identifies 8,18–9,21 as a unit concerning “the weeping God”⁹. Since the lament beginning in 8,18 is grounded in the suffering described in 8,10–17, which is a result of the sin condemned in 8,4–9, it might be desirable to refer to Jeremiah 8–9 (or 8,4–9,21) as the weeping poems. Discussion of these chapters has often centered around who the speakers are, and in particular whether YHWH speaks in 8,23; 9,9 or 9,16–17. If God speaks in any of these verses, then God weeps (or at least wants to weep in 8,23 and 9,17). Broadly speaking, there appear to be two schools of thought: those who see God weeping in one or more of these verses, and those who deny that God weeps in any of them¹⁰. K. O’Connor suspects that those who prefer that God not weep in any text are wed to an image of an invulnerable Almighty

⁸ K. O’CONNOR, *Jeremiah. Pain and Promise* (Minneapolis, MN 2011) 60. Note that some English translations diverge from the MT versification of Jeremiah 9 (MT 8,23 is numbered as 9,1 and MT 9,1–25 as 9,2–26). All references in the present work are to the MT.

⁹ K. O’CONNOR, “The Tears of God and Divine Character in Jeremiah 2–9”, *God in the Fray. A Tribute to Walter Brueggemann* (eds. T. LINAFFELT – T.K. BEAL) (Minneapolis, MN 1998) 172–195, here 179.

¹⁰ Commentators who think YHWH does not weep in the weeping poems include: W. RUDOLPH, *Jeremia* (HAT 12; Tübingen 1968); J.A. THOMPSON, *The Book of Jeremiah* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI 1980); W. MCKANE, *Jeremiah*. 2 vols. (ICC; Edinburgh 1986); R.P. CARROLL, *Jeremiah* (OTL; Philadelphia, PA 1986); J.R. LUNDBOM, *Jeremiah*. 3 vols. (AB 21A–C; New York 1999–2004); W.H. SCHMIDT, *Das Buch Jeremia*. Kapitel 1–20 (ATD 20; Göttingen 2008); L.C. ALLEN, *Jeremiah* (OTL; Louisville, KY 2008). Most admit that YHWH weeps in Jer 48,32.

God ¹¹. Such commentators may not be well read in the literatures of the cultures surrounding Israel. Extra-biblical ancient literatures provide numerous examples of deities who weep. J.J.M. Roberts has adduced several examples from Mesopotamian city laments depicting deities weeping over their beloved cities and persuasively argues that YHWH also weeps ¹². These laments frequently depict the city deity weeping over the suffering of the community and their own abandonment of the city. The Eridu Lament, for example, describes the weeping of the god Enki of the city Eridu:

[Eridu's] lord stayed outside his city as (if it were) an alien city. He wept bitter tears. Father Enki stayed outside his city (as if it were) an alien city. He wept bitter tears. For the sake of his harmed city, he wept bitter tears ¹³.

The text explicitly identifies Enki as “father” and thereby situates Enki’s tears within the context of the attachment relationship in which Enki is depicted as a father weeping over his absent and afflicted child. A lament from a later era speaks of the tears of the goddess Damgalnunna, the consort of Enki:

She walks about stooped over in her house. She cries bitterly. She walks about (aimlessly) in her defiled cella. She cries bitterly. She walks about (aimlessly) in her leveled treasure house. She cries bitterly ¹⁴.

¹¹ O’CONNOR, *Jeremiah*, 65. See also O’CONNOR, “Tears of God”, 183. Similarly, T. FRETHERM, *Jeremiah* (Smith & Helwys Bible Commentary; Macon, GA 2002) 148. Other scholars who acknowledge divine weeping in some passages in Jeremiah include W.L. HOLLADAY, *Jeremiah* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia, PA 1986) I-II; P.C. CRAIGIE et al., *Jeremiah 1–25* (WBC 26; Waco, TX 1991); J.J.M. ROBERTS, “The Motif of the Weeping God in Jeremiah and Its Background in the Lament Tradition of the Ancient Near East”, *The Bible in the Ancient Near East. Collected Essays* (Winona Lake, IN 2002) 132–142, reprinted from *Old Testament Essays* 5 (1992) 361–174.

¹² ROBERTS, “Motif of the Weeping God”. See also F.W. DOBBS-ALLSOPP, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion. A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (BibOr 44; Rome 1993) esp. 75–90 and 178.

¹³ M.W. GREEN, “The Eridu Lament”, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 30 (1978) 127–167, here 133.

¹⁴ M.E. COHEN, *The Canonical Lamentations of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Potomac, MD 1988) 59.

Another lament over Eridu identifies the tears of another goddess:

Nammu, the mother of Enki, went out from the city. Her hands have become heavy through wailing. She cries bitter tears. She beats her chest like a holy drum. She cries bitter tears ¹⁵.

Although weeping deities appear regularly in Mesopotamian city laments, the motif is found outside this genre. The goddess Tashmetu weeps for her divine lover Nabu, and Ishtar weeps for Tammuz ¹⁶. Deities also weep in Mesopotamian narratives. In *Gilgamesh*, the goddess Ishtar weeps over the death of the bull of heaven (VI.168). Belet-ili and the Annunaki weep over the flood both in *Gilgamesh* (XI.115) and *Atraḥasīs* (III.iii.32; iv.10, 15-18), and Enlil weeps over the misery of the gods and then makes humans to do their work (*Atraḥasīs*, I.iii.167). In the *Descent of Ishtar*, Papsukkal, vizier of the gods, weeps before Sin as he describes the lack of fertility following Ishtar's descent (83-84). In *Nergal and Ereshkigal*, Ereshkigal the goddess of the Underworld weeps because she misses her lover Nergal (IV.53).

Divine tears are not limited to Mesopotamian literature. In Egyptian literature, Isis weeps for her son Horus and her husband Osiris ¹⁷. In Ugaritic poetry, Anat weeps over the dead god Baal (KTU 1.5 IV 25–1.6 I 7). In Greek epic, Homer depicts Artemis crying in humiliation after being beaten and chased off the battlefield by Hera (*Iliad*, 21.493-496), and Thetis when she begs Hephaistos to make new armor for her son (18.428). Given the abundant tears shed by ancient deities in the literatures of several cultures surrounding Israel, there is no reason in principle why OT texts may not depict YHWH as weeping. YHWH, like other deities, is presented as angry, repentant, loving, and possessing eyes and face, among other body parts. It should not be surprising if YHWH, like other deities, is also shown to weep.

¹⁵ COHEN, *Canonical Lamentations*, 85.

¹⁶ See *Context of Scripture*. Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World (ed. W.W. HALLO) (Leiden 2003) 445 and 419, respectively.

¹⁷ W.K. SIMPSON (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*. An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry (New Haven, CT ³2003) 97 and 263.

1. *Jeremiah 9,9*

The clearest case of YHWH weeping in the weeping poems appears in Jer 9,9:

Over the mountains I take up weeping and wailing
 (על-ההרים אשא בכי ונהי)
 and over the pastures of the wilderness a lament
 (ועל-נאות מדבר קינה).

YHWH must be the speaker in vv. 8 and 10 and there is no evidence of a change in speaker in v. 9¹⁸. Attempts to introduce Jeremiah as the speaker of v. 9 seem artificial and arbitrary, since scholars typically offer no argument¹⁹. Given the context, it appears that Jeremiah cannot be the speaker of v. 9 anymore than of vv. 8 or 10. Those commentators who make Jeremiah the speaker in v. 9 evidently have only one reason: they do not want YHWH to weep. Modern commentators may not be the only ones uncomfortable with a weeping deity. LXX reads the plural imperative “take up weeping” rather than “I take up weeping”. LXX correctly understands YHWH as the speaker, but makes the people the weepers rather than YHWH. LXX is more likely modified from the MT reading than *vice versa*²⁰.

¹⁸ Those who see YHWH weeping here include HOLLADAY, *Jeremiah*, I, 303-304; M.S. SMITH, “Jeremiah IX 9 — A Divine Lament”, *VT* 37 (1987) 97-99; CRAIGIE, *Jeremiah*, I, 143; G. FISCHER, *Jeremia* (HTKAT; Freiburg 2005) I, 354; FRETHER, *Jeremiah*, 159; L. STULMAN, *Jeremiah* (Nashville, TN 2005) 102; M.E. BIDDLE, *Polyphony and Symphony in Prophetic Literature*. Rereading Jeremiah 7-20 (Studies in Old Testament Interpretation 2; Macon, GA 1996) 31-32; ROBERTS, “Motif of the Weeping God”, 141; O’CONNOR, *Jeremiah*, 65.

¹⁹ MCKANE (*Jeremiah*, 203) says that if the MT is original, then Jeremiah must be the speaker, but he offers no reasons why this should be. Similarly, LUNDBOM, *Jeremiah*, 1.549; THOMPSON, *Jeremiah*, 311-312; CARROLL, *Jeremiah*, 241-242; RUDOLPH, *Jeremia*, 67; SCHMIDT, *Jeremia*, 205.

²⁰ The scholars of the Old Testament Text Project prefer the MT reading supported by 4QJer^a, Aquila, and Symmachus, contra *BHS* textual note and NRSV. See D. BARTHÉLEMY, *Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament* (OBO 50/2; Göttingen 1986) 538-539.

Of the various examples of deities weeping noted above, the tears of Anat over Baal seem particularly parallel to this passage. M.S. Smith proposes that a literary topos of a deity lamenting on the steppe underlies both Jer 9,9 and KTU 1.5 IV 25–1.6 I 7²¹. In the Ugaritic text, the goddess Anat searches for the body of her deceased beloved Baal. She searches every mountain and every hill (*kl.ḡr*; *kl.gb*) which corresponds to “mountains” (ההרים) in Jer 9,9, finds him on the steppe (*dbr*; cf. מדרב), and weeps for him (*bk*; cf. בכי). She then avenges his death by killing Mot. Smith notes the main modification of the topos in Jer 9,9 is that for YHWH the beloved and the enemy are one and the same. YHWH weeps for Israel’s suffering and is the agent of that suffering.

The term “wailing” (נח) occurs often in this chapter and indicates something audible and associated with weeping (Jer 9,9; 31,15) and may be understood as a “dirge” in 9,17.18.19²². The term “lament” (קניה) in 9,9 strengthens the sense that the weeping of YHWH coincides with an intelligible lament which is quoted after כִּי. YHWH weeps over the emptiness of the land in v. 9 and promises in v. 10 to make Jerusalem similarly empty. These two verses show how the punishment that YHWH brings to the people is doubly painful to YHWH. YHWH weeps, wails, and laments over the loss of a cherished relationship, and weeps too because YHWH must inflict the angry blows that threaten the relationship (9,11–15). The text describes these tears, which should cause the Israelites to repent and repair their relationship with YHWH to end the divine tears and save themselves.

2. *Jeremiah 8,23*

Attempts to discern multiple speakers in Jer 8,18–23 so that Jeremiah rather than YHWH weeps in 8,23 are unconvincing. The principal aim of discerning several changes of speaker is first to separate the voices of YHWH and Jeremiah, and second to make Jeremiah, not YHWH, the one who weeps in 8,23²³. J.M. Henderson makes explicit

²¹ SMITH, “Jeremiah IX 9”, 97–99; followed by CRAIGIE, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 145; FISCHER, *Jeremia*, 1.354. The motif is common in Mesopotamian laments. See, for example, COHEN, *Canonical Lamentations*, 184, 331, 336, 381, 531.

²² The term is missing from LXX Jer 9,9.

²³ RUDOLPH, *Jeremia*, 65; THOMPSON, *Jeremiah*, 301–302; MCKANE, *Jeremiah*, 1.188–193; SCHMIDT, *Jeremia*, 201; ALLEN, *Jeremiah*, 111; LUNDBOM,

his strong reaction against the idea that the voices of God and Jeremiah may be blended together and indistinguishable²⁴. He rightly notes that in some passages, God and Jeremiah have a dialogue with each other and their voices are clearly separate (Jer 12,1-6; 15,10-21). However, he and others mistakenly try to apply this separation of divine and prophetic voices elsewhere. A.E. Pilarski offers a convincing refutation of Henderson's argument for identifying Jeremiah as the speaker, and she argues that YHWH weeps in 8,23²⁵. Prophetic speech often begins with "thus says YHWH", which marks prophets as messengers from God. The messenger model makes it difficult to separate the voice of the prophet from the voice of God. In the fourth century, Jerome said that Jer 8,23 "can be understood as spoken both out of the *persona* of the prophet and out of the *persona* of the Lord"²⁶. This same observation may be applied to a great many more texts in Jeremiah and other prophets. In this comment, Jerome shows that he feels no need to separate the prophetic and divine voices, and that he sees no difficulty with biblical language of a weeping deity.

Allowing Jer 8,18-23 to represent the speech of both Jeremiah and God appears to be the most elegant solution to the tangled discussion about various speakers²⁷. As some have argued, there need

Jeremiah, 1.535; FISCHER, *Jeremia*, 1.344; J.M. HENDERSON, "Who Weeps in Jeremiah VIII 23 (XI 1)?: Identifying Dramatic Speakers in the Poetry of Jeremiah", *VT* 52 (2002) 191-206, esp. 205-206. Some scholars who see YHWH weeping in 9,9 do not think YHWH weeps in 8,23: CRAIGIE, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 135-136; HOLLADAY, *Jeremiah*, 1.287-288. M. BIDDLE, *Polyphony*, 30, thinks YHWH weeps in 8,23, but, like others, finds more changes of speaker than the text warrants.

²⁴ HENDERSON, "Who Weeps?", 191-192.

²⁵ A.E. PILARSKI, "A Study of the References to *bat-ammī* in Jer 8:18-9:2(3): A Gendered Lamentation", *Why?...How Long?* Studies on Voice(s) of Lamentation Rooted in Biblical Hebrew Poetry (eds. L.S. FLESHER et al.) (LHBOT 552; New York, forthcoming). Others who see YHWH weeping in 8,23 include FRETHEIM, *Jeremiah*, 148, 155-156; BIDDLE, *Polyphony*, 30-32; ROBERTS, "Motif of the Weeping God", 140-141; O'CONNOR, *Jeremiah*, 62-62; STULMAN, *Jeremiah*, 102.

²⁶ JEROME, *Commentary on Jeremiah* (trans. M. GRAVES) (Ancient Christian Texts; Downers Grove, IL 2011) 60.

²⁷ BIDDLE, *Polyphony*, 29-30, sees YHWH as the one weeping in this passage, but in his concern to separate and identify diverse voices, he does not acknowledge that the prophetic and divine voices may merge. O'CONNOR (*Jeremiah*, 62-63), T. FRETHEIM, *The Suffering of God* (Philadelphia, PA 1984)

not be many speakers in this passage. The beginning of 8,19 introduces a short quote from “the daughter of my people” and the people evidently speak again in v. 20²⁸. The several changes of speaker postulated by many scholars have no basis in the text, so I prefer to understand the entire speech as YHWH speaking through Jeremiah, with two short quotes from the people in vv. 19 and 20. Once one acknowledges that YHWH (and not Jeremiah) weeps in Jer 9,9, then the tears of YHWH might appear also in 8,23 where the speaker expresses the desire to weep copiously:

Would that my head were water (מִי־יִתֵּן רֹאשִׁי מַיִם),
and my eyes a fount of tears (וְעֵינַי מִקּוּר רִמְעָה)
that I might weep (וְאִבַּכְהָ) day and night
for the slain of my daughter people.

O'Connor thinks that the speaker is not weeping, but desires to do so²⁹. I prefer to see the speaker as having wept and wishing to continue without interruption after finding his tears exhausted. But if his head were transformed into water, then he could weep without interruption. A common measure of the seriousness of grief is the frequency and duration of crying episodes and other poetic texts that mention weeping both night and day (Ps 42,4; Jer 14,17; Lam 2,18). Here, the speaker's grief is greater than the volume of tears his body can produce. The text may reflect the notion that brain matter is the source of tears. This conception is consistent with ancient Greek medicine and a similar Ugaritic text in which Kirta urges his son not to weep for him (KTU 1.16 I.25-28)³⁰:

<i>bn . al . tbkn .</i>	Son, do not cry
<i>al / tdm . ly .</i>	do not shed tears for me
<i>al . tkl . bn / qr . 'nk.</i>	spend not the flow of your eyes
<i>mḥ. rišk / udm 't</i>	nor the brains of your head with your tears

160-161, and STULMAN, *Jeremiah*, 25, urge that no sharp distinction be made between the voices of God and Jeremiah since Jeremiah embodies God's suffering. Similarly, FRETHERM, *Jeremiah*, 148.

²⁸ Thus O'CONNOR, *Jeremiah*, 62.

²⁹ O'CONNOR, *Jeremiah*, 64.

³⁰ On the brain as the source of tears in Greek medicine, see P. PRIORESCHI, *A History of Medicine* (Omaha, NE 2004) II, 277.

The Ugaritic passage explicitly identifies the brains (*mḥ*) as the source of tears, and Jer 9,9 seems to reflect the same idea³¹. The Hebrew word for “brain matter” is not attested, although the Hebrew cognate מִזְה is used with reference to fatty food in Isa 25,6³². The writer may have preferred the term ראש here because the expression מֵי ראש represents a play on the phrase מֵי ראש (“poisoned waters”), which occurs three times in Jeremiah and twice within the weeping poems (8,14; 9,14; 23,15). A similar wordplay of ראש (“head”) and ראש (“poison”) is evident in Job 20,16 and Deut 32,32-33. Several translations read “spring of water” (REB; NABRE), although the term עֵין (“spring”) is absent. Its absence seems a striking omission of a potential wordplay with עֵין (“eye”) in the following line.

In this passage, YHWH and Jeremiah both weep over the impending doom of the people as Jeremiah embodies the tears of YHWH in his own weeping. The copious tears desired in 8,23 would manifest the great emotional pain expressed in 8,18 and 21. The pain of the suffering people hurts the deity and the prophet, and they weep as a result of their attachment to the community. Jeremiah and YHWH have each other, but the networks of relationships in which they are embedded have been disrupted. Their tears serve as a plea for the people to change their ways and avoid catastrophe.

3. *Jeremiah 9,17*

In Jer 9,16-21, YHWH calls keening women to come and perform a dirge. Keening women appear in many societies to lead community lament in times of grief. Keening is a professional art that is typically practiced by older women who teach the skill to younger

³¹ S. GERVITZ, “The Ugaritic Parallel to Jeremiah 8.23”, *JNES* 20 (1961) 41-46, proposed modifying the Ugaritic text to read *my* (“water”) instead of *mḥ* (“brain”) on the basis of Jer 9,9. This unusual attempt to modify a Ugaritic text based on a Hebrew text received surprisingly wide acceptance given that the Ugaritic text is not problematic. See the objections of Y. AVISHUR, “Should a Ugaritic Text be Corrected on the Basis of a Biblical Text?”, *VT* 31 (1981) 218-220, and GERVITZ, “Response”, *VT* 33 (1983) 330-334. COLLINS, “Physiology of Weeping”, mistakenly argues that Israelites thought that tears originated in the kidneys.

³² HALOT I, 568. See G. DEL OLMO LETE – J. SANMARTÍN (eds.), *Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition* (Leiden 2003) II, 538-539.

women (Jer 9,19) ³³. The women learn a lament tradition which they actualize to fit the particular circumstances of a given performance. In this text, the primary purpose for summoning the keening women is to motivate weeping:

that our eyes may run with tears (וְחִרְדְּנָה עֵינֵינוּ דִמְעָה)
and our pupils flow with water (וְעַפְפֵּינוּ יוֹלֵד־מַיִם).

The speech of YHWH is introduced in v. 16 and continues throughout the passage except for the marked quotation of the keening women in v. 18. The text speaks of weeping using two forms of the poetic idiom for weeping that reads literally “our eyes go down with tears”. The idiom appears in its typical form in the first line (cf. Jer 13,17; 14,17), but with lexical substitutions and disrupted word order in the second line. Other examples also substitute מַיִם (“water”) for דִמְעָה (“tears”; Ps 119,136; Lam 1,16; 3,48), and several verbs may be substituted for ירד (“to go down”; cf. Lam 3,49; Job 16,20), although only this text uses נִל (“to trickle”). Only here does עַפְפֵּמִים (“pupils”) replace עֵין (“eye”) in the idiom. The use of the same poetic idiom twice without repetition of lexical items or word order creates a colorful innovation of a distinctively poetic expression for weeping to spotlight the tears of the community.

In 9,17, the speaker expects to weep when the keening women appear, but does not indicate that weeping has been previously absent ³⁴. What changes in 9,17 is the expectation that “our” eyes will weep. Commentators typically understand Jeremiah rather than YHWH as the speaker of vv. 16-21 despite the opening “thus says YHWH of hosts” in v. 16 and “speak, thus the oracle of YHWH” in v. 20. They see the plural language as Jeremiah speaking and including the people in his “our” ³⁵. LXX reads οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ὑμῶν (“your [pl.] eyes”) instead of

³³ L.J.M. CLASSENS, “Calling the Keeners: The Image of the Wailing Women as a Symbol of Survival in a Traumatized World”, *JFSR* 26 (2010) 63-77, esp. 66-67.

³⁴ Pace O’CONNOR, *Jeremiah*, 66, who thinks the speaker is unable to weep due to shock and despair.

³⁵ RUDOLPH, *Jeremia*, 67-68; MCKANE, *Jeremiah*, I, 208; HOLLADAY, *Jeremiah*, I, 309; ALLEN, *Jeremiah*, 119; SCHMIDT, *Jeremia*, 209; FISCHER, *Jeremia*, 364. LUNDBOM (*Jeremiah*, 1.559) takes v. 16 to be the speech of YHWH, but thinks that Jeremiah abruptly takes over the speech in v. 17, which saves YHWH from weeping.

“our”, which acknowledges that YHWH is speaking, but not included among those weeping. Jerome allows YHWH to speak, but admits the speaker could be Jeremiah. He implicitly acknowledges the possibility that divine and prophetic voices merge as in 8,23: “God (or the prophet) unites himself with them by adopting the manner of one sharing in their suffering, so that whatever the people experience he says that he experiences and feels”³⁶. YHWH speaks these words and weeps in this verse, and the first-person language expresses divine solidarity with the people. It includes Jeremiah, who cannot be imagined as dry-eyed while YHWH and the people weep. As in 8,23, Jeremiah embodies YHWH’s weeping. YHWH expects the keening women to have the effect that prophecy has not had. The women will move the people of Israel to weep with YHWH and Jeremiah. Those commentators who understand YHWH speaking these words have overlooked the force of the first-person plural language with which YHWH calls the keening women to make the people weep³⁷. But by saying “we”, YHWH includes the deity along with the people, and both weep together³⁸. Ritual weeping “is an expression of attachment and affirmation of a social bond, whether of individuals weeping over personal loss or of societies over collective ones”³⁹. Throughout the book, the word of YHWH as expressed through Jeremiah generates anger, resistance, and disbelief rather than grief and repentance. In this passage, YHWH hopes that the keening women can bring the people together with their God and prophet and that their shared tears may serve to recreate and reinforce their relationship.

4. *Jeremiah 13,17*

Since tears have a social function, the reactions people have to tears are at least as important as the motives for crying. However, people often conceal their tears from others. This behavior may seem paradoxical or counter-productive, but people are sometimes embarrassed by their tears, especially when they weep outside so-

³⁶ JEROME, *Jeremiah*, 63-64.

³⁷ CARROLL, *Jeremiah*, 246; CRAIGIE, *Jeremiah*, I, 150.

³⁸ O’CONNOR, *Jeremiah*, 67; FRETHERM, *Suffering of God*, 134; FRETHERM, *Jeremiah*, 162; A. BAUER, *Gender in the Book of Jeremiah*. A Feminist-Literary Reading (Studies in Biblical Literature 5; New York 1999) 85.

³⁹ NELSON, *Seeing through Tears*, 202.

cially accepted norms ⁴⁰. In one passage in Jeremiah, the speaker expects to weep secretly:

If you [pl.] do not listen,
 my inmost self will weep in secret (במסתרים חבכה-נפשי)
 because of [your] [pl.] pride.
 my eyes will surely tear (ודמע חרמע)
 and flow with tears (וחרר עיני דמעו)
 for YHWH's flock led away to exile.

Most scholars think that Jeremiah speaks here rather than YHWH ⁴¹. However, as noted above, the voices of God and Jeremiah are not always separable and this passage, like 8,23 and 9,17, combines the weeping of YHWH and Jeremiah ⁴². As in 9,9 and 17, LXX assumes that YHWH is speaking, but not weeping. Rather, the people will weep over their impending doom: “your [pl.] soul (ἡ ψυχὴ ὑμῶν) will weep because of your [pl.] pride, your eyes (οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ὑμῶν) will flow with tears”. YHWH is the last identified speaker in vv. 12 and 14, and speaks also in v. 18. The speech of YHWH noted in v. 15 may apply to what follows (vv. 16-17, or 16-27) as easily as to what precedes. As often, the speech of YHWH and Jeremiah cannot be reliably separated, but allowing that such language may be attributed to both of them seems reasonable. Commentators do not generally ponder why Jeremiah/YHWH would weep “in secret” rather than openly. The phrase could be understood with the first line to mean “if in hiding places you do not listen, my נפש will weep” or, if emended to במסתררים, “if in rebellion you do not listen” ⁴³. Most commentators follow MT and understand the phrase as modifying the weeping rather than the not listening ⁴⁴. McKane cites Kimchi’s distinction between inward grief and outward displays of grief ⁴⁵. Kimchi suggests that the expression clarifies that these tears come from genuine interior sorrow and are

⁴⁰ NELSON, *Seeing through Tears*, 94.

⁴¹ RUDOLPH, *Jeremia*, 96; MCKANE, *Jeremiah*, I, 299; HOLLADAY, *Jeremiah*, I, 406; LUNDBOM, *Jeremiah*, I, 677; ALLEN, *Jeremiah*, 161; SCHMIDT, *Jeremia*, 225; FISCHER, *Jeremia*, 459.

⁴² Thus FRETHEIM, *Jeremiah*, 209; STULMAN, *Jeremiah*, 137.

⁴³ Thus HOLLADAY, *Jeremiah*, I, 405.

⁴⁴ CARROLL, *Jeremiah*, 299-300; CRAIGIE, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 187-188; THOMPSON, *Jeremiah*, 368-369.

⁴⁵ MCKANE, *Jeremiah*, I, 299.

not a mere display. I agree that weeping in secret can hardly be a display for others, although here the speaker advertises secret weeping, which makes it a display. The language used to describe the weeping adds to the extravagant presentation of these sincere and secret tears. The speaker describes the weeping three times using three different verbal expressions. First, the text says “My נפש will weep”, and בכה is the most common means of verbalizing weeping. The force of נפש here indicates the interior and emotional life of the person⁴⁶. Several texts evince a close connection between distress of נפש and weeping, but only Jer 13,17 and Ps 69,11 have נפש as the subject of בכה. Lam 1,16 suggests a connection between weeping and a נפש needing restoration, and both 1 Sam 1,10 and Ezek 27,31 connect bitterness of נפש with weeping. In Job 30,25, weeping and the grieving נפש are parallel. In Jer 13,17, Jeremiah/ YHWH’s נפש, like the term “secret”, suggests the sincerity of the tears. They arise from an interior emotion rather than an insincere display. Second, the text uses an expression unique in ancient Hebrew: ודמע תדמע (“[my נפש] will surely weep”). Although the root דמע occurs as a verb in Ugaritic, it is only a noun in Akkadian and appears as a verb only here in MT, although it surfaces in Sir 12,16; 31,13 and as a proposed reading in Isa 15,9. This is the only one of these occurrences that employs the infinitive absolute plus imperfect construction, evidently emphasizing the frequency and duration of weeping. LXX does not reflect this unusual expression, and some commentators regard it as a later addition⁴⁷. The third and final expression of the speaker’s secret tears employs the idiom ותרד עיני דמעה (“my eye goes down with tears”). This brief passage employs three verbal expressions to describe weeping over the pride of the people (v. 15 and 17), which has led them into exile (v. 17). That these tears are advertised as shed “in secret” by “my נפש” highlights their sincerity. Jeremiah/ YHWH may be proclaiming doom and divine anger, but he and YHWH also feel profound sorrow at the impending disaster. This text announces YHWH’s (and Jeremiah’s) secret tears in hopes that the people will be moved to restore the relationship through repentance.

⁴⁶ See HALOT I, 731, which proposes “soul” in the sense of “the center and transmitter of feelings and perceptions”. Many scholars seek to avoid “soul” as anachronistic. The above translation “inmost self” is from NJPSV.

⁴⁷ MCKANE, *Jeremiah*, 1.300; RUDOLPH, *Jeremia*, 92.

5. *Jeremiah 14,17*

Here again commentators understand these tears as Jeremiah's ⁴⁸. However, the speech is introduced as YHWH's words and YHWH is the one who weeps. Thus, YHWH speaks through Jeremiah in 14,17-18 ⁴⁹. Perhaps Jeremiah also weeps and thereby embodies YHWH's weeping here as in 8,23, but Jeremiah's participation is less clear ⁵⁰. Consequently, I prefer to say that (as in Jer 9,9) YHWH weeps, but Jeremiah does not. In 14,19-22, the people speak in response to YHWH's words, as indicated by the shift to a first-person plural speaker and second-person masculine singular addressee. Since YHWH speaks, the tears belong to YHWH:

Let my eye flow with tears (תִּרְדְּנָה עֵינַי דְּמָעָה)
night and day and without ceasing

As in 13,17, LXX modifies the text to read "your eyes". Again, LXX understands that YHWH speaks these words but seeks to present YHWH as not weeping, while modern commentators read the MT as spoken by Jeremiah. As in 8,23, YHWH desires to weep both "night and day", so the language stresses the continuity of weeping. Also like 8,23, 14,17 speaks of "my (virgin) daughter people" and her "wound" (8,21), which indicates that YHWH weeps for the suffering of the people which YHWH also inflicts. Unlike 8,23, however, this passage employs the poetic idiom "my eyes flow with tears" (also in 9,17 bis; 13,17). The context indicates that this speech is aimed particularly at the prophets who have been telling the people that there will be peace and rains will soon end the drought. The tears of YHWH here explicitly contrast with the optimistic preaching of the prophets. In response to YHWH's tears, the people offer a lament of their own in which they acknowledge their guilt and seek divine assistance in

⁴⁸ RUDOLPH, *Jeremia*, 102; HOLLADAY, *Jeremiah*, I, 436; MCKANE, *Jeremiah*, I, 329; THOMPSON, *Jeremiah*, 385; CRAIGIE, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 203; LUNDBOM, *Jeremiah*, I, 712; ALLEN, *Jeremiah*, 174. CARROLL, *Jeremiah*, 316, identifies the weeper neutrally as "the speaker".

⁴⁹ ROBERTS, "Motif of the Weeping God", 141; FRETHEIM, *Jeremiah*, 224; FISCHER, *Jeremia*, 484; JEROME, *Jeremiah*, 92.

⁵⁰ FRETHEIM, *Jeremiah*, 224, speaks of YHWH weeping here, but not Jeremiah. STULMAN, *Jeremiah*, 144, thinks the voices of Jeremiah and YHWH are too intertwined to separate.

time of need (14,19-22). YHWH desired this conversion in the weeping poems (8,23; 9,9; 9,16-21), but now the petition of the people appears to be too little too late, and YHWH reaffirms the futility of their petition (15,1; cf. 14,11-12).

6. *Jeremiah 48,32*

YHWH weeps in Jer 48,32, although there is uncertainty about whether this language is sincere. YHWH is clearly the speaker in v. 30 and v. 33b. There is no evidence of a change of speaker, so YHWH appears to lament over Moab in vv. 30-33 within a longer divine speech encompassing the unit 48,29-39⁵¹. Lament vocabulary in v. 31 prepares for the weeping in v. 32:

Therefore I wail (אֵילֵּל) over Moab,
 Over all Moab I cry (אֵעֵק)
 Over the people of Kir-Heres I moan (אֶהְנֶה).
 More than weeping (מִבְּכִי)
 for Jazer I weep (אֶבְכֶּה) for you vine of Sibmah.

LXX agrees that YHWH is speaking, but changes the language to second person so that YHWH speaks about humans wailing: “Therefore wail for Moab on all sides, shout to the men of Kir-Heres of drought. As with the weeping of Jazer I will weep for you, vine of Sibmah”⁵². Interestingly, LXX allows that YHWH weeps in v. 33, but shifts the wailing to human speakers. However, the shift from second person to first person may suggest a change of speaker so that a human voice weeps in LXX v. 32 in response to the divine command in LXX v. 31. The distinctively divine language of MT v. 33 (“I dry up the wine from your wine vats”) is not evident in LXX, which could be spoken

⁵¹ See FRETHEIM, *Jeremiah*, 601-603. ALLEN, *Jeremiah*, 485, thinks the voice is human, but acknowledges that the divine interjection in v. 33 complicates the issue. The issue of speakers is not complicated if YHWH speaks throughout, which is the most common understanding of commentators, including those who see no divine tears elsewhere in Jeremiah such as MCKANE, *Jeremiah*, II, 1184; LUNDBOM, *Jeremiah*, III, 291.

⁵² For full comparison of the MT and LXX of Jeremiah 48, see J. WOODS, *Jeremiah 48 as Christian Scripture* (Princeton Theological Monograph Series 149; Eugene, OR 2011) 23-66.

by a human (“the wine was in your vats”). Within MT, the issue of speaker is complicated by the third-person יהנה in v. 31. Most commentators read אנכה with one MS and the eastern Qere⁵³. A final textual problem concerns “more than weeping for Jazer” (מבכי). The parallel text in Isa 16,9 reads בבכי (“with the weeping of Jazer”) and LXX reads ὡς κλαθμὸν (“as the weeping of Jazer”)⁵⁴. MT renders the sense that the weeping over the vine of Sibmah will exceed that over Jazer, whereas the other readings suggest the two weepings will be the same.

The language of YHWH’s weeping may indicate insincere tears, and this show of weeping and lamenting is part of mocking Moab and an expression of *Schadenfreude*. The view that YHWH’s weeping is sarcastic assumes that the text is ironic because it is part of the “oracles against the nations”. As this genre label indicates, these texts are understood as mocking or taunt-songs in which no genuine lament may occur. J.B. Geyer, however, argues persuasively that these texts should be called “oracles about the nations”⁵⁵. These passages include material that is clearly positive concerning the nations (e.g., Jer 48,47; 49,6.39). Geyer further argues that these texts derive from liturgical use and employ mythological motifs and therefore traditional attempts to coordinate the oracles with specific historical events are misguided. The genre includes lament as a basic element, and these laments may be read as sincere since there is no reason to suspect sarcasm⁵⁶. I am inclined to concur with Geyer and most commentators that the divine tears in Jer 48,32 are sincere⁵⁷. Interestingly, many commentators

⁵³ See McKANE, *Jeremiah* II, 1184, who notes creative attempts to make sense of MT and argues for reading the first person.

⁵⁴ For analysis of the relationship between Isaiah 15–16 and Jeremiah 48, see WOODS, *Jeremiah* 48, 67–98.

⁵⁵ J.B. GEYER, *Mythology and Lament*. Studies in the Oracles about the Nations (SOTS Monographs; Hants, UK 2004) 3–7.

⁵⁶ B.C. JONES, *Howling over Moab*. Irony and Rhetoric in Isaiah 15–16 (SBLDS 157; Atlanta, GA 1996) makes the most detailed case for reading Isaiah 15–16 as ironic, but see the critique of GEYER, *Mythology and Lament*, 151–154.

⁵⁷ Similarly, WOODS, *Jeremiah* 48, 265–269; STULMAN, *Jeremiah*, 364; FRETHEIM, *Jeremiah*, 602, 604–605; FRETHEIM, *Suffering of God*, 143; HOLADAY, *Jeremiah* II, 354–355; FISCHER, *Jeremia*, 503–504.527. RUDOLPH, *Jeremia*, 261, sees the lament as ironic; and McKANE, *Jeremiah*, II, 1192–1193; LUNDBOM, *Jeremiah*, III, 291, and ALLEN, *Jeremiah*, 478, remain cautiously uncommitted. Of these scholars, only Allen thinks these tears are Jeremiah’s and not YHWH’s.

who deny that YHWH weeps in the weeping poems, acknowledge that YHWH weeps here. Perhaps the divine tears are “acceptable” within the oracles about the nations because these oracles have been regarded as “the dregs of the prophetic movement”⁵⁸.

The weeping of YHWH in Jer 48,32 resembles the weeping of YHWH elsewhere in Jeremiah with the exception that here YHWH sorrows over the suffering of a people other than Israel/Judah. Fretheim remarks that “to hear such mourning on the part of God for a non-Israelite people is striking indeed”⁵⁹. However, YHWH’s concern for other nations appears in other oracles about the nations (Jer 48,47; 49,6,39), and Moabites appear in a positive light in Ruth and 1 Sam 22,3-4⁶⁰. As with Israel, YHWH announces judgment, but takes no pleasure in the ensuing destruction. YHWH weeps empathetically for the pain of Moab. J. Woods suggests that this empathy is further motivated by the futility of the Moabites’ attempts to save themselves. She renders the sense of these verses as “I will make an end of Moab (and therefore all she does is futile). Her sacrifices, though earnest, are pointless. Therefore my heart wails over the futility. (I will make an end of Moab) and therefore all she has gained will perish”⁶¹. Moab thereby presents a pathetic spectacle and can motivate YHWH’s tears even though YHWH is also the agent of Moab’s destruction.

III. Divine Tears in the Context of Jeremiah

Although Jeremiah presents the catastrophe that overcomes Judah as brought by YHWH, the book also presents YHWH as suffering in consequence of the destruction of the people. YHWH weeps for Israel in 8,23; 9,9; 9,17; 13,17; 14,17 and for Moab in 48,32. Jeremiah may embody these divine tears in at least 8,23; 9,17; 13,17.

⁵⁸ D.L. CHRISTENSEN, *Transformations of the War Oracle in Old Testament Prophecy*. Studies in the Oracles against the Nations (Harvard Dissertations in Religion; Missoula, MT 1975) 1. He does not concur with the assessment he summarizes.

⁵⁹ FRETHEIM, *Suffering of God*, 133. Similarly, WOODS, *Jeremiah* 48, 165-169.

⁶⁰ WOODS (*Jeremiah* 48, 265-269) thinks the extensive focus on YHWH’s mourning over Moab might be partially explained by the positive references to Moab in other parts of Scripture.

⁶¹ WOODS, *Jeremiah* 48, 265.

Thus, in those passages that allegedly originate the image of Jeremiah as “the weeping prophet”, the focus is on the tears of YHWH, not Jeremiah. There are seven additional instances of weeping in the book that do not involve Jeremiah or YHWH. Unlike the examples discussed above, grief is not the dominant motive for the tears shed by people other than YHWH and Jeremiah. In these passages tears are more often invoked to describe joy (31,9.15-16; 50,4), repentance (3,21), (false) solidarity (41,6), and grief (22,10; 48,5). A pattern appears to emerge in the distribution of divine weeping in Jeremiah. YHWH weeps over Israel in the first part of the book, but after 14,17 these tears vanish and YHWH’s tears only reappear in 48,32 in reference to Moab. How might we understand the disappearance of YHWH’s weeping? The motif of weeping participates in a wider development within Jeremiah in which strongly emotional divine language expresses YHWH’s deep attachment to Israel, but Israel’s rejection of YHWH eventually leads to YHWH’s punishment of Israel. Consequently, the language articulates a gradual “detachment” in which YHWH separates YHWH’s self from Israel in order to prepare to bring about the necessary punishment. This detachment means that YHWH will not listen to the cries of Israel (11,11), instructs Jeremiah not to intercede on their behalf (11,14; 14,11-12; 16,5-7), and says that even Moses and Samuel’s pleas would not be heard (15,1). As these statements of rejection pile up and become more intense, the motif of divine weeping declines and disappears from the book. In several references to weeping, Jeremiah’s tears embody the tears of God. Later, Jeremiah’s refusal to enter into mourning or fasting with the people embodies YHWH’s rejection of Israel and refusal to remain in relationship with the people. When forbidding Jeremiah to enter a house of mourning, YHWH specifically states, “For I have withdrawn my peace (שְׁלוֹמִי) from this people — oracle of YHWH — [my] love (הַחֶסֶד) and compassion (הַרְחָמִים)” (Jer 16,5). As a result of this withdrawal of love and compassion, YHWH no longer weeps for Israel and expects Jeremiah to stop weeping in order to manifest this divine detachment as he had previously manifested YHWH’s care and concern.

The weeping of YHWH and Jeremiah suggests a deep attachment to the people of Israel which is threatened by the imminent catastrophe. The tears express a mixture of grief at separation and empathy over Israel’s suffering. Emotional language other than weeping contributes to the development of YHWH’s initial love for

and eventual detachment from Israel. Although the book famously includes strong language condemning the people for their crimes and making the case that they deserve their enormous suffering, this anger derives from YHWH's love for Israel. The harsh speeches begin with a fond recollection of Israel as a new bride (Jer 2,2-3). The nation is a choice vine (2,21), the lovely and delicate daughter Zion (6,2), and the people are children of YHWH (3,19), and my daughter people (6,26; 8,11.19). In 12,7-13, YHWH's speech highlights the emotional pain of having to inflict suffering on a people YHWH loves. Israel is "my house" (v. 7) "my heritage" (vv. 5.7.9), "my delightful portion" (v. 10), and "the beloved of my נַפְשִׁי" (v. 7), whom YHWH has abandoned (v. 7), hated (v. 8), and given over to desolation (vv. 9-13). YHWH's emotional distress appears vividly in the weeping poems. In a divine speech that culminates in tears (8,18-23), YHWH begins by saying, "My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick". The weeping of YHWH intensifies and magnifies these expressions of emotional anguish. Tears signify deep distress, especially when an important relationship is threatened or terminated, for example by exile or death. The motif of divine weeping in Jeremiah draws attention to the suffering of YHWH. YHWH inflicts punishment on the people, but also feels pain as the people suffer since YHWH (like Jeremiah) is deeply attached to the community that is being wrecked. Indeed, YHWH's agony has an additional dimension since YHWH is the agent of Israel's suffering, and not a fellow victim (Jer 12,7-13; 31,20).

Why does Jeremiah describe the emotions of God and depict YHWH as shedding tears? Jeremiah frequently employs metaphorical language to describe the relationship between YHWH and Israel. The relationship is often parent-child or husband-wife. The language of tears fits neatly into both of these relationships, since weeping is an attachment behavior that motivates empathy and care-giving in those who witness the tears. Weeping is a powerful non-verbal expression of distress and need, and the weeping of YHWH is revealed to the people in order to motivate their concern for YHWH. They should respond with empathy for a suffering God and seek to soothe YHWH's pain by their own repentance and conversion. This conversion would also serve their own good since it would alleviate YHWH of the burden of having to punish them. Fretheim proposes that for those who experienced the catastrophe Jeremiah lived through, the revelation that YHWH's experience of the punishment is sorrow rather than satisfac-

tion serves an important function⁶². It maintains a seemingly broken relationship and offers hope that YHWH will heal the pain.

IV. Conclusion: divine *pathos* in Jeremiah

I have argued that many scholars mistakenly deny the tears of YHWH and make Jeremiah alone the one who weeps in Jer 8,23; 9,9.17; 13,17; 14,17. Similarly, LXX modifies the language of MT in order to avoid referring to YHWH weeping in every example except 8,23 where LXX seems to assume that Jeremiah speaks, but not God. Most modern interpreters have attempted to obfuscate the divine tears without modifying the MT by arguing that Jeremiah rather than YHWH speaks. Given the clarity of the Hebrew text about divine weeping in certain places (Jer 9,9; 14,17; 48,32) and the general overlap of prophetic and divine voices elsewhere (Jer 8,23; 9,17; 13,17), the denial that YHWH weeps seems motivated by theological concerns rather than exegesis. However, these concerns are not made explicit. Interpreters from LXX to modern scholars appear to be motivated by the assumption that God is impassive and therefore YHWH may not be said to weep.

The OT includes considerable language of divine *pathos* that scholars freely acknowledge, but weeping is a particularly powerful bodily manifestation of emotional disturbance that many Western cultures regard as unmasculine. Consequently, divine weeping may appear less “acceptable” than, for example, divine anger. Traditionally, anthropomorphic language about God has been understood in a metaphorical or analogical sense rather than as literal truth about the bodily or emotional life of God. Over the past century or more, however, this traditional understanding has been sharply challenged. Many theologians now speak of the *pathos* or suffering of God, and argue that God experiences emotional states including grief and sorrow. Consequently, the biblical language of God’s *pathos* has been read more literally⁶³. Those who deny any divine weeping in Jeremiah may be reacting against this modern development. Jerome, by contrast, could acknowledge the weeping of

⁶² FRETHEIM, *Jeremiah*, 155-156.

⁶³ FRETHEIM, *Suffering of God*; A.J. HESCHEL, *The Prophets* (Jewish Publication Society of America; New York 1962) esp. 221-278.

YHWH in Jeremiah without abandoning his belief in the impossibility of God because he lived in a context in which the impossibility of God was not seriously challenged.

My argument that YHWH weeps in Jeremiah rests on the language of the texts and the cognate literatures in which divine weeping is clear and common. My argument is not intended to contribute to the debates about the impossibility of God, and the divine weeping in Jeremiah should not be used as a “proof-text” for divine passibility. Indeed, I argue that the exegesis of Jeremiah has suffered because it has been implicitly connected to this theological debate. Jeremiah speaks of YHWH weeping, but this language, like anthropomorphic language about God generally, is not easy to interpret. In his discussion of anthropomorphic language in ancient Near Eastern texts, M.S. Smith concludes “On the one hand, the deities are rendered in the image and likeness of their adherents. On the other hand, the treatment of the deities clearly shows an awareness that divinity is not the same as humanity”⁶⁴.

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SUMMARY

The article analyzes several passages in Jeremiah in which God weeps in order to understand the function of divine weeping in the book. Attention to the distribution of weeping in the book finds that God’s weeping (8,23; 9,9.17; 13,17; 14,17) gives way to divine anger and refusal to hear the petitions of the people (15,1; 16,5-7). LXX and many modern commentators have attempted to deny that God weeps in these passages. However, several texts clearly depict God weeping, and weeping deities are common in ancient Near Eastern literature.

⁶⁴ M.S. SMITH, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*. Israel’s Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts (Oxford 2001) 103. Also D. GRANT, “A Brief Discussion of the Difference between Human and Divine חַמָּה”, *Bib* 91 (2010) 418-424, notes, in an analysis of divine emotion, how human and divine anger are spoken about differently in OT texts.

Il νόμος in Gal 5,13–6,10

Delle 32 ricorrenze del termine νόμος nella lettera ai Galati appare abbastanza agevole riscontrare il significato e il valore per quanto riguarda i primi quattro capitoli della lettera, mentre il quadro si complica nei restanti due, in particolare in 5,13–6,10. Infatti in Galati 1–4 νόμος si riferisce alla legge mosaica (o Legge), vista generalmente in opposizione alla fede in Cristo ¹, con le eccezioni di 3,21b, versetto nel quale indica un ordinamento generale di origine divina, e di 4,21b, dove il significato è quello di Sacra Scrittura. Al contrario, in 5,13–6,10 troviamo tre passaggi molto dibattuti, nei quali il senso e la connotazione, positiva o negativa, di νόμος non sono chiari: 5,14; 5,23b; 6,2. Crediamo allora che sia necessario provare a far luce su questi versetti, considerati all'interno del contesto della lettera. Inoltre a partire dal dettato testuale, ci domandiamo: siamo di fronte a una posizione contraddittoria di Paolo riguardo alla Legge ² o è possibile comprendere l'uso di νόμος nella prospettiva di uno sviluppo coerente dell'argomentazione paolina in Galati?

Cominceremo dunque con l'esegesi attenta di ciascuno dei tre versetti summenzionati, considerati all'interno del loro brano. Li leggeremo poi inseriti nella sezione alla quale essi appartengono e nell'ambito dell'intera lettera. Proveremo così a delineare la logica con la quale Paolo parla di νόμος in Gal 5,13–6,10 tenendo conto di quanto ha fatto in precedenza nella stessa epistola. Infine visto il contesto nel quale νόμος qui si trova, da tutto questo potremo raccogliere anche alcune generali indicazioni, utili per l'etica paolina.

¹ Lapidario, a tal proposito, il commento di G. STANTON, "The Law of Moses and the Law of Christ. Galatians 3:1–6:2", *Paul and the Mosaic Law. The Third Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism* (Durham, September, 1994) (ed. J.D.G. DUNN) (WUNT 89; Tübingen 1996) 101: "Paul's main point is crystal clear: πίστις and νόμος are at odds with one another".

² Posizione classica di H. RÄISÄNEN, *Paul and the Law* (WUNT 29; Tübingen 1983).

I. Egesi di Gal 5,14

ὁ γὰρ πᾶς νόμος ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ πεπλήρωται, ἐν τῷ ἁγαπήσεις τὸν
πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν

Il primo elemento da rilevare nel versetto è che esso si collega con quanto precede attraverso un γάρ dal valore causale. Paolo fornisce così la motivazione dell'invito alla vicendevole servitù nell'amore, espressione della vera libertà cristiana. La particella è inserita all'interno dell'espressione ὁ πᾶς νόμος che, come ben sottolinea Lémonon ³, presenta la Legge come un insieme, un unico blocco. Resta però difficile dimostrare che tale espressione sia in diretto contrasto con ὅλον τὸν νόμον di 5,3, la quale denoterebbe la Legge vista nelle sue singole prescrizioni ⁴, perché sarebbe piuttosto πᾶς ad avere nella lingua greca un valore partitivo.

A nostro avviso, il contrasto tra 5,3 e 5,14 è più evidente al livello dei verbi. Infatti se qui troviamo πεπλήρωται bisogna chiarire da subito che πληρώω non è ποιέω di 5,3 e che quindi non ci si riferisce al "praticare" la Legge, come in altri passi della lettera (3,10.12; 5,3), ma all'"adempiere" la Legge. Il perfetto passivo del verbo di 5,14 per alcuni è da interpretare come un'azione passata con effetti al presente, da riferirsi a Cristo che ha portato a compimento la Legge ⁵; per altri come perfetto gnomico, proprio di frasi generali o sentenze, in relazione al cristiano ⁶. In effetti il riferimento a Cristo non è provato dal contesto, mentre (in ragione del versetto precedente) lo è quello al cristiano che nel servizio reciproco vive l'ἀγάπη. L'adempimento o compimento del νόμος, da parte del credente, avviene ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ cioè riguardo a una sola parola, a un solo comandamento. Segue così la citazione letterale di Lv 19,18 [LXX]. In aggiunta dobbiamo menzionare anche la posizione di coloro che considerano il verbo πληρώω come intransitivo, producendo un senso, secondo il quale, sostanzialmente, la Legge si adempirebbe da sola ⁷. Tale interpretazione non ri-

³ J.-P. LÉMONON, *L'épître aux Galates* (Commentaire biblique: Nouveau Testament 9; Paris 2008) 182.

⁴ Ad es. F.J. MATERA, *Galatians* (SP 9; Collegeville, MN 1992; ²2007) 193.

⁵ Ad es. R.N. LONGENECKER, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Dallas, TX 1990) 242.

⁶ Ad es. A.M. BUSCEMI, *Lettera ai Galati* (Analecta SBF 63; Jerusalem 2004) 545.

⁷ Ad es. BDAG 828.

sulta però corretta al livello grammaticale perché i verbi greci in -όω sono causativi e quindi transitivi ⁸, inoltre il parallelo paolino di Rm 13,8 mostra come la Legge non trova da sola il proprio adempimento, ma è il credente, animato dall'ἀγάπη, che la porta a compimento, confermando così la nostra lettura.

Se il contesto originale della citazione anticotestamentaria vedeva nel “prossimo” il connazionale israelita, la tradizione cristiana primitiva lo riferisce a qualsiasi persona, così come attesta la parabola del Samaritano di Lc 10,27-37. In Gal 5,14 πλησίον transcende evidentemente ogni differenza etnica (cf. 3,28) ma rientra nell'ambito ecclesiale, visto il contesto prossimo costituito da 5,13, nel quale si parla di un servizio reciproco tra i credenti in Cristo.

Per completare il quadro lessicale, rimane da chiedersi il significato di νόμος nel nostro versetto. La prima risposta non può che segnalare il richiamo alla Legge, così come finora è stato in Galati, anche con il rinvenimento nel testo, da parte di alcuni, di un comune riassunto giudaico di essa ⁹. Ma evidentemente, come in 4,21b, pure qui siamo di fronte a una parola biblica per cui il termine porta con sé anche il significato di Scrittura a dimostrazione che, secondo quanto afferma Romanello ¹⁰, la distinzione, presentata da alcuni autori, di νόμος come rivelazione e come legislazione è troppo semplicistica.

A questo punto è possibile guardare al versetto nella sua totalità e capirne il significato complessivo. Per Sanders ¹¹ Paolo chiederebbe ai Galati, i quali non si devono considerare sotto la Legge, di adempierla non facendosi circoncidere, ma amando il prossimo perché questa sarebbe la loro osservanza; 5,14 costituirebbe dunque un'esortazione-ingiunzione all'adempimento della Legge. Da parte nostra, non possiamo concordare con le posizioni di Sanders. Infatti il versetto non parla di alcuna osservanza o pratica della Legge (non c'è il verbo ποιέω) né rappresenta alcuna esortazione, bensì una motivazione di quella espressa nel versetto precedente. Quindi, per giustificare l'invito alla paradossale e reciproca schiavitù nell'ἀγάπη dei credenti, Paolo af-

⁸ Cf. L. CIGNELLI – G.C. BOTTINI, “Le diatesi del verbo nel greco biblico (I)”, *Liber Annus* 43 (1993) 125, n. 2.

⁹ Cf. E.P. SANDERS, *Paolo, la legge e il popolo giudaico* (Studi Biblici 86; Brescia 1989) 161-162.

¹⁰ S. ROMANELLO, *L'identità dei credenti in Cristo secondo Paolo* (La Bibbia nella storia 11; Bologna 2011) 194.

¹¹ SANDERS, *Paolo, la legge*, 165.

ferma che questa ἀγάπη del prossimo è richiesta dalla Legge, presentata nella Scrittura, e che dunque tale amore rappresenta la volontà di Dio. D'altra parte, l'Apostolo intende indicare ai destinatari che l'adempimento della Legge è compiuto dal credente nel servizio dell'altro all'interno della comunità, cosicché, come ha ripetuto più volte nella lettera, non deve essere suddito della Legge, ma, pur non essendo guidato da essa, egli la porta a compimento, come effetto del proprio agire amorevole per il prossimo, senza aver bisogno di osservare le sue prescrizioni. A questo proposito, il confronto con Rm 8,4 appare interessante, poiché in tale versetto si dice che τὸ δίκαιωμα della Legge è compiuto dai cristiani, i quali cioè, camminando secondo la mozione dello Spirito, adempiono le giuste esigenze della Legge (si riferisce probabilmente soprattutto al comandamento dell'amore, cf. 13,8-10).

Quindi in 5,14 Paolo non contraddice, così come sostiene Räisänen¹², quanto affermato in 5,3, dove l'Apostolo, all'interno di un diverso contesto dato dalla pericope di 5,1-12, sostiene che se i Galati si fanno circoncidere, saranno costretti a praticare tutta la Legge, perché nel nostro versetto non si chiede in alcun modo di osservarla seguendone le prescrizioni. Allora Paolo distinguerebbe, secondo quanto sostenuto da Sanders, tra alcuni precetti legali che sono da osservarsi e altri no? Proprio 5,3 ci mostra che per il giudaismo del tempo, la possibilità di un'obbedienza che non sia totale, cioè a tutti i comandamenti della Legge, era impensabile e, di conseguenza, appare smentire la suddetta ipotesi. Dalla sponda opposta a quella di Sanders, altri¹³ ritengono che qui l'Apostolo concentri tutta la Legge nel comandamento dell'amore, procedendo a una radicale riduzione del suo contenuto e quindi a un'intenzionale abrogazione della *Torah*. Ma il testo di 5,14 non permette neppure questa conclusione opposta: Paolo non parla di abrogazione (e neppure di riduzione), anzi il fatto che la Legge, col suo comandamento di Lv 19,18, costituisca la motivazione dell'agire amorevole del credente verso l'altro attesta della sua validità, in quanto espressione della volontà di Dio trasmessa dalla Scrittura¹⁴.

¹² RÄISÄNEN, *Paul*, 63.

¹³ Ad es. U. SCHNELLE, *Apostle Paul. His Life and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI 2005) 293.

¹⁴ Così afferma, riguardo al rapporto tra l'etica paolina e la Legge, J.-N. ALETTI, "L'éthique de Jésus et de Paul. Enjeux et propositions", *RCatT* 34 (2009) 364: "La finalité de la Loi – aimer le prochain sans retour, comme le Christ – est plus que jamais en vigueur".

Da ultimo è necessario considerare il versetto nell'ambito dell'intera pericope nel quale esso si trova. Il brano parenetico di 5,13-26 ha come motivo dominante la libertà per amare del cristiano, guidato dallo Spirito ¹⁵. Infatti, Paolo, dopo aver insistito sulla libertà del cristiano dalla Legge e dalla circoncisione in 5,1-12 — e, particolarmente in tale contesto, dopo aver messo in guardia i Galati dal farsi circoncidere e dalla conseguente osservanza legale in 5,3 — ha ora la necessità di mostrare che il credente, ormai libero dalla Legge, non vive senza alcuna regola morale e non si abbandona al peccato. Perciò sin dal primo versetto del brano di 5,13-26 si afferma che la libertà del credente non è un pretesto per vivere nella carne ma per essere al servizio gli uni gli altri nell'amore. Tale presa di posizione è motivata dunque con il richiamo alla Legge per provare che il cristiano, pur non essendone suddito, l'adempie nel proprio comportamento e che quindi la sua libertà, lungi da essere licenziosità, non lo conduce sulla strada del peccato ma a seguire una regola morale. Tale norma etica, come sarà chiarito a partire dal v. 16, consiste in definitiva nella docilità alla mozione dello Spirito. Dal carattere incidentale di questo riferimento alla Legge all'interno del brano di 5,13-26 appare chiaro che l'Apostolo qui non intende fondare su di essa la morale cristiana, basata invece sulla guida dello Spirito; infatti tale guida è descritta proprio come alternativa a quella della Legge in 5,18. Con acutezza Perrot ¹⁶ sottolinea che l'ἀγάπη presentata all'inizio come un'esigenza della Legge è ormai diventata, cambiando padrone, un frutto dello Spirito e si mostra come il luogo per eccellenza di verifica di tutte le esigenze morali. Infine, la stessa conclusione sul fondamento non legale dell'etica cristiana appare valere anche per il parallelo di Rm 13,8b-9 dove si aggiunge, a quella dell'adempimento, la prospettiva della ricapitolazione: nel comandamento dell'amore la Legge trova la sua sintesi ¹⁷.

¹⁵ Cf. F. BIANCHINI, *Lettera ai Galati* (Nuovo Testamento – commento esegetico e spirituale; Roma 2009) 138-147.

¹⁶ C. PERROT, "La Loi et son accomplissement selon Ga 5,13-26", *La foi agissant par l'amour* (*Galates 4,12–6,16*) (ed. A. VANHOYE) (SMBenBE 13; Roma 1996) 142.

¹⁷ Per una lettura sinottica dei due testi si veda A. PITTA, *Lettera ai Galati* (SOC 9; Bologna 1997) 339-340.

II. Esegesi di Gal 5,23b

κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος

A proposito dell'interpretazione di 5,23b Campbell¹⁸ chiarisce le tre questioni da affrontare, legate al significato e al riferimento di ciascuno dei seguenti termini: νόμος, κατὰ, τοιούτων.

Il termine νόμος senza articolo potrebbe far pensare a qualsiasi forma di legge, tanto più che questo è il senso del vocabolo in un parallelo di Aristotele¹⁹. Ma per l'interpretazione di una parola decisivo è sempre il suo specifico contesto letterario²⁰ — e a questo proposito, si deve anche rilevare che il testo dello Stagirita ha ben poco a che fare con quello dell'Apostolo²¹ — così sino a 5,12 Paolo usa indifferentemente per νόμος la forma con o senza articolo per indicare la Legge (eccetto che in 3,21b; 4,21b) e in 5,13-26 appare continuare su questa scia pure nel v. 18, la ricorrenza più prossima a quella del nostro versetto, dove è utilizzato il sintagma ὑπὸ νόμον. Perciò la stragrande maggioranza degli esegeti trova in 5,23b il riferimento alla legge mosaica e così anche noi.

La preposizione κατὰ seguita dal genitivo potrebbe significare sia “riguardo a” che “contro”. Nei dizionari del NT²² la prima accezione non risulta mai attestata, mentre la seconda è diffusa e, soprattutto, nella nostra pericope al v. 17 è quella utilizzata da Paolo per mostrare l'opposizione irriducibile tra carne e Spirito. Perciò dobbiamo concludere con l'attribuire a κατὰ il significato di “contro”.

Da ultimo, discusso è il genere di τοιούτων se maschile o neutro. Campbell²³ propende per il maschile — come avviene nella succitata frase di Aristotele, che egli tuttavia non ritiene costituire un rimando adeguato — in ragione del contesto della lettera, nel quale si vuole affermare che i cristiani, pur essendo senza Legge, non sono peccatori (cf. 2,17) e del parallelo che si avrebbe con il v. 21, dove alla fine delle opere della carne si parla delle persone che le compiono. Come

¹⁸ R.A. CAMPBELL, “‘Against such things there is no Law’? Galatians 5,23b again”, *Exp Tim* 107 (1996) 271.

¹⁹ Aristoteles, *Pol* 1284a.14.

²⁰ Cf. J. BARR, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London 1961) 206-262.

²¹ Si veda una buona critica in CAMPBELL, “‘Against such things there is no Law’?”, 271.

²² Ad es. BDAG 511-513.

²³ CAMPBELL, “‘Against such things there is no Law’?”, 272.

già detto, per l'interpretazione di un termine è necessario partire dal contesto letterario; per questo il parallelismo di Campbell appare difficile da percepire dall'ascoltatore e quindi innaturale, mentre proprio nel v. 21 abbiamo il neutro τὰ τοιαῦτα per le opere della carne, a conclusione del loro elenco cominciato al v. 19. Così τοιοῦτων al v. 23b è da prendersi come neutro, in riferimento alla lista, appena terminata, degli elementi che compongono il frutto dello Spirito.

Delineando il significato complessivo del versetto, emerge come Paolo intenda affermare che la Legge non ha niente da obiettare contro questi effetti della vita nello Spirito: "la Legge non è contro tali cose". A sua volta Longenecker²⁴ sostiene che l'affermazione di 5,23b è una sottolineatura data con effetto retorico per reiterare il contenuto del v. 14, poiché "tali cose" soddisfano pienamente le richieste della Legge e vanno ben oltre di esse. Infatti il primo e, probabilmente, riassuntivo elemento del "frutto dello Spirito" è ἡ ἀγάπη (v. 22), oggetto del comandamento di Lv 19,18 citato al v. 14. Si deve rilevare che, come già ricordato, nella pericope c'è un altro importante uso di νόμος, quando al v. 18 si dice che chi è guidato dallo Spirito non è ὑπὸ νόμου. Rispetto a questo versetto, il nostro intende affermare che il cristiano, pur non essendo più sottoposto alla Legge, se si lascia guidare dallo Spirito non compie qualcosa che vada contro di essa. Quindi nel v. 23b la questione non è, come Longenecker e altri sostengono, quella di escludere da parte di Paolo un'interpretazione legalistica del "frutto dello Spirito", bensì, secondo quanto sostiene anche Barbaglio²⁵, il difendersi dalla possibile accusa di anomismo amorale, dal momento che l'Apostolo afferma la sufficienza dello Spirito come fondamento dell'etica, escludendo, in pari tempo, l'osservanza delle norme della Legge.

Con ogni probabilità, Paolo nella pericope di 5,13-26, e in particolare nel v. 23b intende assicurare i suoi destinatari, anche a motivo della propaganda degli avversari, sostenendo che per il credente basta seguire nel suo agire solo la mozione dello Spirito, senza alcun bisogno delle prescrizioni della Legge. La vita cristiana così prospettata non cade nell'immoralità, ma anzi produce i buoni effetti elencati nei vv. 22-23a. Infatti se nel brano, da una parte, è indicata per il cristiano una chiara alternativa tra la guida della Legge e quella dello Spirito (v. 18), dall'altra, è presente un'irridu-

²⁴ LONGENECKER, *Galatians*, 262-263.

²⁵ G. BARBAGLIO, *La teologia di Paolo*. Abbozzi in forma epistolare (La Bibbia nella storia 9; Bologna 1999; 2001) 487.

cibile contrapposizione tra il principio della carne e quello dello Spirito (vv. 16-17, 19-23) perché egli, al momento della venuta alla fede, ha fatto morire in se stesso il dinamismo della carne partecipando alla redenzione determinata dalla croce di Cristo (v. 24).

III. Esegesi di Gal 6,2

Ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε καὶ οὕτως ἀναπληρώσετε
τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ

L'uso di νόμος in 6,2 è sicuramente il più discusso non solo di 5,13-6,10 ma dell'intera lettera. Tuttavia, prima di soffermarci sul problematico sintagma ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, è necessario analizzare il versetto nel quale esso è inserito. La prima parte di 6,2 è costituita da un'esortazione a portare "i pesi" gli uni degli altri all'interno della comunità cristiana. Il sostantivo βάρος nel NT ricorre sei volte e appare significare per tre volte "peso", in senso figurato di aggravio (Mt 20,12; At 15,28; Ap 2,24), una volta in senso di autorità (1 Ts 2,7) e una di pienezza (2 Cor 4,17)²⁶. La prima accezione si addice bene a Gal 6,2a perché, in connessione con il verbo βαστάζω "sostenere, portare", richiama alcuni testi classici greci, nei quali si presenta l'amico come colui che condivide le difficoltà esistenziali dell'altro, indicate proprio con βάρος²⁷. Tuttavia il parallelo più adeguato è il testo paolino di Rm 15,1 nel quale si dice che all'interno della comunità i "forti" devono portare (stesso verbo βαστάζω) le fragilità dei "deboli". Quindi possiamo pensare che in Gal 6,2a Paolo esorti i destinatari a caricarsi delle problematiche del vivere proprie del fratello e, alla luce del versetto precedente, anche di quelle derivanti dalle sue cadute.

La formula καὶ οὕτως, "e così", introduce la seconda parte di 6,2 come strettamente legata alla prima. Nella seconda parte è poi detto ai Galati: ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Dal punto di vista della critica testuale si deve però notare che il verbo è riportato dai manoscritti in altri due modi: ἀποπληρώσετε e ἀναπληρώσατε. La prima di queste due altre lezioni si può escludere perché sostenuta da un unico, seppur importante, testimone (P⁴⁶). Rimangono dunque l'im-

²⁶ Cf. BDAG 167

²⁷ Ad es. Xenophon, *Mem* 2.7.1.

perativo aoristo ἀναπληρώσατε e l'indicativo futuro ἀναπληρώσετε. Dal punto di vista della critica esterna sono entrambi ben supportati, mentre dal punto di vista della critica interna l'imperativo ἀναπληρώσατε sembra essere un'omologazione derivante dal precedente imperativo βαστάζετε, perciò appare preferibile la lezione ἀναπληρώσετε. Con il verbo al futuro 6,2b si mostra bene come una conseguenza di 6,2a e, secondo quanto nota Pigeon²⁸, come l'interpretazione cristiana (o paolina) della suddetta massima di derivazione ellenistica. Da parte sua, il verbo ἀναπληρώω è la *forma complex* del verbo πληρώω utilizzato in 5,14 e non denota particolari variazioni di significato rispetto ad esso; tali verbi, considerati anche all'interno del loro rispettivo contesto, possiedono lo stesso senso.

Alla fine arriviamo alla questione più discussa che, come accennato, è l'interpretazione dell'espressione ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ utilizzata nel nostro versetto come complemento oggetto di ἀναπληρώσετε. A nostra conoscenza, il miglior *status quaestionis* è quello elaborato da Chester²⁹ che presenta sette principali letture del sintagma. A tale accurato elenco, è possibile aggiungere ancora un'ipotesi, quella da poco formulata da Murphy-O'Connor, secondo il quale il genitivo τοῦ Χριστοῦ della nostra espressione sarebbe epesegetico: "la legge che è Cristo". Tale interpretazione è motivata dall'esegeta irlandese in base al concetto filoniano, ripreso anche nella tradizione regale ellenistica, di una persona come legge vivente non scritta³⁰.

Come dunque interpretare l'espressione ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ? Anzitutto dal punto di vista retorico si parla di paradosso³¹ o di ossimoro³². Indipendentemente da quale delle due sia la figura retorica più adatta, questo rilievo comporta che l'ascoltatore è posto dall'autore di fronte a un sintagma che lo sorprende e lo invita a riflettere

²⁸ C. PIGEON, "La loi du Christ' en Galates 6,2", *SR* 29 (2000) 427.

²⁹ A. CHESTER, *Messiah and Exaltation*. Jewish Messianic and Visionary Traditions and New Testament Christology (WUNT 207; Tübingen 2007) 536-569.

³⁰ J. MURPHY-O'CONNOR, "The Unwritten Law of Christ", *RB* 119 (2012) 213-231. Dobbiamo rilevare che, come mostra l'autore, Filone parla delle vite delle persone virtuose come ἄγραφοι νόμοι. Purtroppo tale ipotesi di confronto non può valere per Gal 6,2, visto che non vi è presente il determinante aggettivo ἄγραφος.

³¹ PITTA, *Galati*, 381.

³² CHESTER, *Messiah and Exaltation*, 582.

per giungere al suo significato più profondo. Certo è che fino a questo momento nella lettera νόμος e Χριστός sono stati fortemente contrapposti, mentre ora (per la prima e unica volta) si trovano uniti insieme. Si tratta dunque di una situazione nuova ed eccezionale e perciò, per l'interpretazione dell'espressione, non può valere l'insistenza di Pitta³³ a considerare da subito il contesto di tutta la l'epistola, dove νόμος sarebbe sempre riferito alla *Torah* e dove si troverebbe un adeguato parallelo nell'adempimento della Legge di 5,14. Preferiamo dunque prima prendere a sé il sintagma e poi inserirlo nel suo ambito letterario.

L'analisi comincia con l'approfondimento del genitivo τοῦ Χριστοῦ che qualifica in maniera determinante ὁ νόμος. Secondo Pitta³⁴ le posizioni possono essere riassunte a due: genitivo soggettivo o oggettivo. Questa designazione può però risultare ambigua, quindi è preferibile porre l'alternativa tra genitivo d'origine³⁵, o oggettivo, che fa di Cristo il punto di riferimento del νόμος³⁶. Tra le due preferiamo la prima soluzione perché pochi versetti prima, in 5,24, lo stesso genitivo τοῦ Χριστοῦ indica probabilmente un possesso e perché la seconda soluzione appare essere un modo per evitare di considerare il vocabolo νόμος al quale è riferito.

Per quanto riguarda il primo termine del sintagma, cioè νόμος, non essendo in Galati mai usato in dipendenza di un genitivo, dobbiamo necessariamente ricorrere ad altri testi paolini. Tale parola (con o senza articolo) regge i seguenti genitivi: τῶν ἔργων e πίστεως in Rm 3,27, τοῦ θεοῦ in Rm 7,22.25; 8,7, τοῦ νοός in Rm 7,23, τῆς ἀμαρτίας in Rm 7,23.25; 8,2; τοῦ πνεύματος in Rm 8,2. A parte quando νόμος è collegato al genitivo τοῦ θεοῦ, dove emerge il significato di "legge" e il richiamo dell'intero sintagma alla *Torah*, negli altri casi il nostro vocabolo è da tradurre come "norma, principio di vita". In effetti, lo stesso Räsänen³⁷ in uno studio linguistico di quasi 30 anni fa, mostra che il significato primigenio di νόμος nell'uso greco è legato a ciò che è proprio, normale e carat-

³³ PITTA, *Galati*, 379-381.

³⁴ A. PITTA, *Paolo, la Scrittura e la Legge*. Antiche e nuove prospettive (Studi biblici 57; Bologna 2008) 135.

³⁵ Ad es. SCHNELLE, *Apostle Paul*, 293.

³⁶ Ad es. PIGEON, "La loi du Christ", 437.

³⁷ H. RÄISÄNEN, "Sprachliches zum Spiel des Paulus mit νόμος", *Glaube und Gerechtigkeit*. In *Memoriam Rafael Gyllenberg* (eds. J. KIILUNEN et. al.) (Finnish Exegetical Society; Helsinki 1983) 131-154.

teristico - cosicché può essere tradotto come “usanza”, “regola”, “norma etica”, “comportamento tipico”, “procedura usuale” — e che diversi autori greci giocano chiaramente sulle diverse accezioni del termine, collegando poi questi risultati con i sopracitati brani di Romani e con il nostro testo di Gal 6,2.

Altro possibile confronto di ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ è quello con l'espressione unica di 1 Cor 9,21: ἔννομος Χριστοῦ, riferita da Paolo proprio alla sua persona. Il contesto di questo versetto è segnato da forti contrasti e da una rilevante carica retorica. Al v. 20 l'Apostolo chiarisce che non è ὑπὸ νόμον, così come dice del cristiano in Gal 5,18, pur essendosi reso giudeo con i Giudei. Dall'altra parte al v. 21 egli afferma di non essere ἄνομος θεοῦ ma appunto ἔννομος Χριστοῦ, pur essendosi fatto un-senza-Legge con coloro che erano senza Legge. Per il senso di questo passaggio concordiamo con Barbaglio³⁸ quando dice che Paolo intende affermare come, nonostante sia libero dai vincoli della legge mosaica, non sia libero dal volere di Dio (ἄνομος θεοῦ) che è la sua legge, ma sia “uno dentro la legge di Cristo” (ἔννομος Χριστοῦ) e quindi profondamente legato a lui; cosicché qui “legge” non indica un set di prescrizioni, ma un vincolo obbligante, derivante dal rapporto dell'Apostolo con il suo Signore.

Dopo aver presentato le varie proposte interpretative e analizzato gli elementi che compongono l'espressione, dobbiamo fornire la nostra lettura di ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ presente esclusivamente in Gal 6,2. Secondo noi siamo di fronte a un'antanaclasi del termine νόμος, cioè l'uso di un termine con significato diverso o opposto a quanto finora generalmente fatto nella lettera (eccezioni, come visto sono 3,21b e 4,21b), richiamando il testo di Rm 7,21-25³⁹ e anche gli autori classici. L'accezione assunta dal termine è allora quella di “principio di vita, norma” e l'intero sintagma esprime il modo di vivere “in Cristo” per il credente o la condotta adeguata per il cristiano⁴⁰. In questo modo Gal 6,2 è collegato a Rm 3,27, dove si parla del principio di vita derivante dalla fede, ma soprattutto a Rm 8,2, versetto nel quale si delinea la nuova esistenza del

³⁸ G. BARBAGLIO, *La prima lettera ai Corinzi* (SOC 16; Bologna 1996) 446.

³⁹ Per l'antanaclasi di νόμος in Rm 7,21-25 si veda J.-N. ALETTI, *La Lettera ai Romani*. Chiavi di lettura (Nuove vie dell'esegesi; Roma 2011) 76.

⁴⁰ Cf. S. WESTERHOLM, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*. Paul and His Recent Interpreters (Grand Rapids, MI 1988) 123-126.

giustificato “in Cristo”, ormai guidato dallo Spirito. Da questo rimando e dall’uso nel testo di un composto di πληρόω Chester ⁴¹ prende le mosse per interpretare ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ di Gal 6,2 in chiave escatologica, mettendo in collegamento la formula all’idea giudaica della legge dei tempi messianici. In effetti, il contesto del nostro versetto si mostra ben diverso da quello di Rm 8,2 e non è escatologico, quanto invece legato al presente della vita comunitaria dei Galati, inoltre l’uso di πληρόω e dei suoi derivati non è indicativo perché soltanto in alcuni casi assume in Paolo una valenza in vista dei tempi ultimi ⁴², perciò la proposta di Chester non risulta accettabile. Piuttosto è possibile vedere nel nostro sintagma, così come segnalano diversi autori ⁴³, una sfumatura ironica nei confronti dei destinatari, desiderosi di seguire la legge di Mosè, mentre, secondo l’Apostolo, per loro non può essere che quella di Cristo il punto di riferimento della propria esistenza.

Il v. 2 fa parte della pericope di Gal 6,1-10, nella quale sono raccolte esortazioni specifiche, legate all’ambito comunitario, che traducono nel contesto dei destinatari cosa significhi il “camminare secondo lo Spirito”, proposto nel precedente brano di 5,13-26 ⁴⁴. Pigeon ⁴⁵, ritrovando una coerenza in 6,1-10, ben sottolinea la necessità di riattaccare il nostro versetto al precedente in modo da leggerlo all’interno del suo contesto. La pericope comincia con l’esortazione di Paolo a ciascuno dei membri delle comunità della Galazia, chiamati οἱ πνευματικοί in quanto hanno ricevuto lo Spirito, affinché correggano con dolcezza il fratello che ha commesso una colpa, vigilando poi sulla propria condotta per non incorrere nello stesso errore. Così, poiché colui che corregge potrebbe a sua volta essere corretto, il v. 1 si apre a una prospettiva di reciprocità che è pienamente manifestata al v. 2 con l’invito a portare “i pesi gli uni degli altri”. Condividendo le difficoltà esistenziali degli altri, i credenti adempiranno davvero quanto richiede il modo di vivere “in Cristo”. Questa condotta adeguata per il cristiano non è altro che il camminare secondo lo Spirito indicato in 5,25. In conclusione, se in 5,25 Paolo invitava coloro che

⁴¹ CHESTER, *Messiah and Exaltation*, 594-601.

⁴² Cf. BDAG 827-830.

⁴³ Ad es. PITTA, *Galati*, 381.

⁴⁴ Per una giustificazione di questi assunti, cf. BIANCHINI, *Lettera ai Galati*, 147-156.

⁴⁵ PIGEON, “La loi du Christ”, 428-429.

avevano ricevuto la vita nuova attraverso lo Spirito a comportarsi secondo la sua mozione, ora in 6,2, concretizza tale esortazione, rivolgendosi ai destinatari, designati proprio come οἱ πνευματικοί, perché si prendano cura l'uno dell'altro, essendo questa la modalità per esprimere, guidati dallo Spirito, la loro esistenza cristiana. In tale quadro, il ricorso all'originale sintagma ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ segnato da una sua notevole valenza retorica, intende, prima, colpire gli ascoltatori e, poi, condurli a una riflessione. Questo ragionamento è finalizzato a spiegare, da una parte e in negativo come avviene in Rm 6,15-23, che il cristiano libero dalla Legge non è senza alcun principio morale, dall'altra e in positivo, che il credente trova la norma del suo agire nella realtà nuova del proprio profondo legame con Cristo, senza la necessità del ricorso a un'altra legge quale quella mosaica.

IV. Il ragionamento sul νόμος in Gal 5,13–6,10

Terminata l'analisi di Gal 5,14; 5,23b; 6,2 vogliamo comprendere il filo del ragionamento paolino riguardo al νόμος in Gal 5,13–6,10. Pitta⁴⁶ lega insieme proprio questi tre versetti per il fatto che testimoniano una valutazione positiva del νόμος, riferito sempre alla Legge. Da parte nostra, come visto, non possiamo condividere appieno le posizioni di Pitta, soprattutto per il richiamo in tutti e tre i casi alla Legge. Comunque ravvisiamo un legame tra 5,14; 5,23 e 6,2: Paolo afferma che nel cristiano, il quale vive il servizio all'interno della comunità, si trova adempiuto il comandamento dell'amore contenuto nella Legge (5,14); in effetti lo stesso credente, pur non essendo più sottoposto alla Legge, se si lascia guidare dallo Spirito non compie qualcosa che vada contro di essa (5,23b) piuttosto egli, condividendo le difficoltà della vita degli altri, realizza quanto richiede il modo di vivere "in Cristo" (6,2). Così qui assistiamo, più che a una visione positiva della Legge, a un progressivo distaccamento da essa anche nell'ambito morale. Infatti per l'Apostolo il cristiano, nel suo comportamento guidato dallo Spirito, adempie, senza esserne suddito, quello che la Legge richiede e non fa niente contro di essa, cosicché ne è ormai libero per abbracciare un'altra legge, quella derivante dal suo nuovo legame con Cristo. Quindi il richiamo tra 5,14 e 6,2, segnalato da molti autori⁴⁷, può significare che la Legge è adempiuta

⁴⁶ PITTA, *Galati*, 379-380.

⁴⁷ Cf. CHESTER, *Messiah and Exaltation*, 552-554; 561-569.

(perfetto passivo *πεπλήρωται* in 5,14) dai cristiani, ormai svincolati da essa, quando essi compiono (futuro attivo *ἀναπληρώσετε* in 6,2) “la legge di Cristo”, cosicché la legislazione mosaica non è più per loro il riferimento etico.

A questo punto emerge la necessità di delineare la logica con la quale Paolo parla di νόμος in Gal 5,13 – 6,10 a partire da quanto precedentemente trattato nella lettera ⁴⁸. Nei primi 4 capitoli di essa il νόμος indica quasi sempre la Legge, vista generalmente in forte opposizione alla fede in Cristo rispetto alla giustificazione e quindi alla salvezza. Tuttavia il brano di 3,19-25 tende a riequilibrare la posizione paolina, affermando che la Legge fa conoscere il peccato, ha origine divina, non è contro le promesse di Dio e ha svolto nella storia della salvezza una funzione temporanea di custodia del credente, in attesa di Cristo. Conclusa la parte argomentativa di Galati, dedicata all’origine (cc. 1-2) e al contenuto del vangelo annunciato dall’Apostolo (cc. 3-4), nell’ultima sezione (cc. 5-6) l’Apostolo esorta a una vita conforme a tale vangelo. Dapprima, Paolo invita i destinatari a vivere nella libertà dalla Legge e, in particolare, dalla circoncisione (5,1-12), poi li ammonisce affinché questa libertà venga utilizzata per amare, guidati dallo Spirito (5,13-26). In questo secondo passaggio egli vuol sottolineare che il cristiano, svincolato dalla Legge, non si abbandona al peccato, per questo al v. 14 si dice che nel suo comportamento di amore per il fratello, adempie il comandamento di Lv 19,18 e quindi tutta la legislazione mosaica. La Legge dunque non è abrogata, in quanto espressione della volontà di Dio, trasmessa dalla Scrittura, ma il cristiano non è ad essa sottoposto perché guidato dallo Spirito (v. 18). Se egli effettivamente si abbandona a tale mozione, producendo “il frutto dello Spirito” (vv. 22-23a), nell’ambito del quale emerge l’ἀγάπη, la Legge non potrà aver niente da eccepire e, con lei, quelli che ad essa si rifanno (v. 23b). Quindi al termine del brano, Paolo riassume la sua proposta riassuntiva per l’agire del credente nel “camminare secondo lo Spirito”, con il quale è stato rinnovato (v. 25). Questa formula generale trova la sua concretizzazione in ambito comunitario proprio grazie al brano di 6,1-10, composto da varie esortazioni utili per la vita ecclesiale. In tale contesto, al v. 2 ricorre ancora il termine νόμος che viene però a essere utilizzato in

⁴⁸ Le considerazioni che seguono sono necessariamente sintetiche, per l’analisi dei vari brani citati ci permettiamo di rimandare a BIANCHINI, *Galati*, 138-156.

maniera diversa rispetto a quanto finora generalmente fatto nella lettera (eccezioni, come visto, sono 3,21b e 4,21b), in modo da esprimere la norma dell'agire del credente, segnato dalla realtà nuova del proprio profondo legame con Cristo: egli adempirà "la legge di Cristo", prendendosi carico delle difficoltà della vita del fratello, senza aver bisogno del diretto riferimento alla Legge.

In conclusione, seguendo anche Pitta⁴⁹, possiamo sostenere che in Galati c'è uno sviluppo coerente della concezione paolina sulla Legge — pure se il termine *νόμος* non sempre significa la stessa cosa — sviluppo che trova in Gal 6,2 il suo culmine. In base a questo percorso, Paolo chiude sostenendo che il credente non ha più bisogno della legge di Mosè perché ha quella di Cristo, norma della propria vita animata dallo Spirito. Come corollario di tali conclusioni è possibile anche dire che in Galati la Legge, in quanto manifestazione della volontà di Dio rivelata nella Scrittura, seppur possieda una funzione temporanea all'interno del suo piano di salvezza, non è abrogata ma compiuta nel contesto della nuova economia cristiana. In questo modo risulta chiaro come nella lettera non rientri nella parte esortativa ciò che è stato gettato fuori dalla sezione argomentativa, cioè il valore salvifico della Legge⁵⁰, né che vi sia incoerenza, affermando, allo stesso tempo, l'abolizione della Legge e la sua valenza positiva⁵¹.

Essendo le affermazioni sul *νόμος* legate alla morale cristiana in Gal 5,13–6,10 è infine possibile anche avanzare alcune indicazioni riguardo all'etica paolina. Se una certa tradizione protestante sosteneva che in Paolo la Legge è superata come *Heilsweg* ma non come *Lebensnorm*⁵², in base alla nostra analisi si deve invece sostenere che la Legge non ha un ruolo decisivo ma accessorio nell'esortazione paolina e che non rappresenta il fondamento della sua etica. La morale proposta dall'Apostolo invece è basata sul dono e l'azione dello Spirito, ricevuto dal cristiano ormai beneficiario della nuova vita "in Cristo". Tuttavia il credente, pur non essendo più suddito della Legge e quindi libero da essa, non è un-senza-legge, ma rispondendo alla mozione dello Spirito con l'*ἀγάπη* soprattutto

⁴⁹ PITTA, *Galati*, 381.

⁵⁰ Cf. LONGENECKER, *Galatians*, 241-242.

⁵¹ RÄISÄNEN, *Paul*, 199.

⁵² Cf. R. PENNA, *L'apostolo Paolo*. Studi di esegesi e teologia (Parola di Dio 2.12; Cinisello Balsamo 1991) 557.

verso il fratello nella fede, adempirà le giuste richieste, volute da Dio, presenti nella Legge. La norma del suo agire non si mostra però esterna a lui, bensì interna perché è nell'interiorità del credente che lo Spirito agisce e conforma la vita a Cristo e al suo vangelo. Infine le esortazioni presenti in Gal 5,13–6,10, legate anche all'utilizzo di νόμος, ci mostrano che Paolo ritiene importante ricordare ai destinatari la necessità di una risposta personale al dono di grazia ricevuto per non soccombere alla tentazione di ricadere nella logica della vita “nella carne” chiusa a Dio e al prossimo, dalla quale con il battesimo hanno preso congedo per vivere portando “il frutto dello Spirito”.

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SUMMARY

In Gal 5,13–6,10 we find three much-debated passages in which the meaning and connotation, positive or negative, of νόμος are not clear: 5,14; 5,23b; 6,2. This article seeks to shed light on these verses, considered within the context of the letter. Starting with the text as it stands, it is shown how it is possible to understand the use of νόμος in the setting of a coherent development of Paul's thought in Galatians. Lastly, in view of the paraenetic context in which νόμος is used, some general indications are brought together which are useful for Pauline ethics.

Is the Word of God Incomplete? An Exegetical and Rhetorical Study of Col 1,25¹

The common reading of the phrase πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ in Col 1,25 has emphasized the apostolic task of preaching the gospel everywhere. Following Rom 15,19 many biblical scholars interpret the fulfillment as full proclamation of the gospel. However, some of them have turned their attention to the exact nature of this fulfillment². In this paper I intend to analyze the train of thought of Col 1,24-29 in order to determine the meaning of this phrase in the letter. My purpose is to show how the rhetorical devices of “accumulation” and “reversal” combined in 1,24-29 point to an ethical purpose. In this way, we will demonstrate that “bringing to completion the word of God” means not only preaching the gospel to every human being, but also making everyone mature in Christ. A similar syntactic arrangement in 1,9-12 will confirm the ethical nuance of the verb πληρόω in the letter. First, we will present a brief *status quaestionis*; second, the rhetorical arrangement of the units (1,24-29 and 1,9-14); third, some reflections on πληρόω; and, finally, some concluding remarks.

I. *Status quaestionis*

The main exegetical issues in Col 1,25 are three. First, the meaning of δῆνακος: is the service to the gospel (1,23) different from the service to the church (1,25)? Second, the meaning and background of the expression κατὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι. Third, the content of πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ.

¹ I wish to thank the Jesuit community at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley for the financial and professional support that allowed me to complete this project.

² The word of God is fulfilled not only when it is announced, but when it is dynamically and effectively proclaimed. See P.T. O'BRIEN, *Colossians, Philemon* (WBC 44; Waco, TX 1982) 83; E. LOHSE, *Colossians and Philemon. A Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (ed. H. KOESTER) (Hermeneia; Philadelphia 1971) 73.

The second issue involves, at least two other topics. First, the meaning of οἰκονομία: should we understand οἰκονομία as commission and profession (*Amt*) or as arrangement and plan (*Ordnung*)³? Does this term belong to the language of administration or not⁴? What is its semantic linkage with Eph 1,10; 3,2? Are these related? Are we speaking of the same “economy” of God’s grace (see also Eph 3,9; 1 Tim 1,4)⁵? Second, the Pauline or non-Pauline background of the phrase τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι: do the cross references allow us to read οἰκονομία as synonymous with χάρις?

Col 1,25: κατὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς.
1 Cor 3,10: Κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι.

N. Frank’s reading, based on the striking parallel between Col 1,25 and 1 Cor 3,10, shows that the institutional term οἰκονομία took the place of χάρις⁶. According to A. Standhartinger, by replacing χάρις with οἰκονομία Colossians would include in the same divine plan both the revelation of the mystery and the sufferings and struggles of the διάκονος⁷. This modification in the textual reception would

³ A. Standhartinger discusses the meaning of οἰκονομία. Among other possibilities, she prefers to speak of God’s plan or God’s arrangement. However, she does not seem to give clear criteria for her choice. See A. STANDHARTINGER, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Intention des Kolosserbriefs* (NT.S.; Leiden 1999) 169-170.

⁴ M. Wolter considers οἰκονομία as a term of Hellenistic administration here related to the given commission or ministry (*Amt*). However, he does not offer proofs of such Hellenistic background. See M. WOLTER, *Der Brief an die Kolosser, der Brief an Philemon* (ÖTBK 12; Gütersloh 1993) 102.

⁵ In Eph 3,2.9 and Col 1,25-26 this οἰκονομία is later associated with the μυστήριον. However, it seems to refer back to God’s saving plan hidden in him over the ages. Is it about the same plan prepared for Israel in the Old Testament or is it about a new, different plan fully disclosed in Christ? In other words: how should we understand the continuity of God’s saving plan?

⁶ See the formula composed of χάρις + δίδωμι (passive) + μοι in Rom 12,3; 15,15; 1 Cor 3,10; Gal 2,9; Eph 3,2.7; the grace given in Rom 12,6; 1 Cor 1,4; 2 Cor 8,9; Eph 4,7; 2 Tim 1,9. The parallel texts in Eph 3,2.7 suggest that a redactor, probably the same as for Colossians, edited the Pauline formula (already present in Rom 12,3; 15,5). See N. FRANK, *Der Kolosserbrief im Kontext des paulinischen Erbes: eine intertextuelle Studie zur Auslegung und Fortschreibung der Paulustradition* (WUNT II/271; Tübingen 2009) 99.

⁷ A. STANDHARTINGER, “Colossians and the Pauline School”, *NTS* 50 (2004) 581.

suggest that the editor adapted the formula according to some theological interest, which M. Wolter calls 'institutional tendency'⁸.

The third exegetical issue in Col 1,25 deals with the phrase πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ, which presents at least two difficulties of interpretation. First, the verb πληρόω could bear two different meanings: realization of the discourse (i.e. to accomplish the discourse); or fulfillment of the word (i.e. to broadcast the gospel)⁹. Second, the phrase τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ seems to take up the mention of the gospel in Col 1,5 and 1,23. Is the "word of God" a *terminus technicus*, i.e. a word pronounced by God (subjective genitive) or does it refer to the apostolic preaching about God (objective genitive)¹⁰?

A first reading of the whole phrase could suggest that the word of God is, or was, incomplete. Paul's apostolic service would consist then in making it complete; as E. Lohse sees it, to broadcast the word of God everywhere and to proclaim it to every creature under heaven¹¹. Some authors try to go beyond this spatial formulation by emphasizing its purpose. For example, F.F. Bruce includes the acceptance in faith of this word so that it achieves its purpose¹².

Several scholars underline the quality and modality of this realization rather than the proclamation itself. P.T. O'Brien, for instance, agrees with Bruce and Percy in affirming that the preaching of the

⁸ According to M. Wolter, Eph 3,2 would depend on Col 1,25 and it should be considered as a good sample of the harmonization of the language of Ephesians with that of Colossians. See WOLTER, *Der Brief an die Kolosser*, 103.

⁹ Contra E. Lohse, M. Wolter considers that πληρόω in 1,25 should not be understood as realization (*Verwirklichung des Redes*) but as fulfillment (*Erfüllung*) in the sense of the global spread of the gospel. The expression is probably linked with the technical designations of the apostolic mission in Acts 12,24; 19,20; Rom 15,19; 2 Tim 4,17. See WOLTER, *Der Brief an die Kolosser*, 103; see also LOHSE, *Colossians and Philemon*, 73.

¹⁰ A. Standhartinger proposes that λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ is a *terminus technicus* used as the OT prophets used it. She quotes as proof 2 Chr 36,21. STANDHARTINGER, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Intention des Kolosserbriefs*, 170. Other scholars take the expression to mean the development of the apostolic service. The definition of Paul's service in 1,23.25 to the gospel and to the church becomes more precise in the second reference, which is service to the community of faith. (See also 1 Cor 3,5). FRANK, *Der Kolosserbrief im Kontext des paulinischen Erbes*, 100.

¹¹ LOHSE, *Colossians and Philemon*, 73.

¹² F.F. BRUCE, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (NIC; Grand Rapids, MI 1984) 83.

word reaches the world and is accepted in faith when that word is “dynamically and effectively proclaimed in the power of the Spirit”¹³. They find the main proofs supporting these spatial and modal nuances in 1,23 (τοῦ κηρυχθέντος ἐν πάσῃ κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν); 1,28 (καταγγέλλομεν + adverbial – modal participles: νουθετοῦντες [...] καὶ διδάσκοντες) and in its closest semantic reference: Rom 15,19¹⁴. J-N. Aletti considers, in addition, that the full realization of this spatial and modal proclamation might be the ἄνθρωπον τέλειον in Christ (Col 1,28)¹⁵.

In the footsteps of these scholars I intend to discuss the particular way in which the word of God fully achieves its purpose. However, unlike some of them, I find the semantic cross references (for example, 1 Cor 3,10; Rom 15,19) inadequate when it comes to fixing the meaning of διακονος, the function of the οἰκονομία and the meaning of the fulfillment of the word of God. Instead, I shall analyze, first, the arrangement of the unit to evince its rhetorical pattern, and then, as result, its semantic components; in particular, the meaning of πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ.

II. The Rhetorical Arrangement

1. *Delimitation and Function*

Most scholars point out the boundaries of the section in 1,24-29 and 2,1-5. These units are easily differentiated from 1,21-23 because of their semantics. Mentioning the apostle’s sufferings and struggles, as a form of inclusion (1,24.29; 2,1), as well as repeating the μυστήριον motif (1,26.27; 2,2), confirm the inner unity of the section.

¹³ P.T. O’BRIEN, *Colossians, Philemon* (WBC 44; Waco, TX 1982) 83.

¹⁴ “[...] so, from Jerusalem and around, as far as Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ (πεπληρωκέναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ)” (Rom 15,19). Rom 15,15-16 presents a similar description of the apostolic service; here the Pauline proclamation is related to terms already met with in Colossians: grace, gift and gospel. See also FRANK, *Der Kolosserbrief im Kontext des paulinischen Erbes*, 100.

¹⁵ The expression τέλειος ἄνθρωπος usually translated as “perfect” or “mature” describes the purpose of the apostolic proclamation. Eph 4,17 presents the same semantic content including the harmonizing of knowledge and faith within the new human being. See J-N. ALETTI, *Lettera ai Colossesi*: introduzione, versione, commento (SOCr 12; Bologna 2011) 128.

They do not reach the same agreement when determining the function of the section. In fact, for the last two decades, some scholars, applying relatively similar rhetorical approaches to the text, have not resolved whether Col 1,24–2,5 belongs to the epistolary corpus or not. On the one hand, first in his commentary and years later at a meeting of experts, M. Wolter qualified 1,24–2,5 as the self-presentation (*Selbstvorstellung*) of the apostle with the purpose of creating a trustful relation with a community that he did not found. By means of a literary fiction the author of Colossians would introduce himself to addressees he had never personally met. M. Wolter's reading considers 1,24–2,5 part of the epistolary introduction but not of the epistolary corpus¹⁶.

On the other hand, J.-N. Aletti has shown Wolter's dependence on F. Schnider and W. Stenger's arguments. They criticize J.T. Sanders and J.L. White for rigidly following (*mit allzu starrem Blick*) the early epistolary model as it is found in the papyrus letters, and in particular for neglecting a necessary transition between epistolary introduction (*praescriptum* and thanksgiving report) and epistolary corpus¹⁷.

In turn, Schnider and Stenger depend on W.H. Wuellner's remarks concerning the epistolary opening of Romans. According to Wuellner, Rom 1,13–15 shows a continuing effort on the part of the sender to establish an ethos in order to persuade his audience. Wuellner's premises followed by Schnider and Stenger are: Romans is an argumentation (*Rede*), and an argumentation needs to create an ethos persuading the hearers to trust the speaker. The rhetorical function of such an ethos in the exordium of a discourse is to provide implicit premises "such as reminding the reader of the speaker's authority"¹⁸.

¹⁶ "Wie in Tim 1,12–17 steht auch hier die Selbstvorstellung des fiktiven Autors zwischen Proömium und Briefcorpus". WOLTER, *Der Brief an die Kolosser*, 98. In a similar way, N. Frank names the section "apostolische Selbstcharakterisierung". FRANK, *Der Kolosserbrief im Kontext des paulinischen Erbes*, 89. See also T. VEGGE, "Polemic in the Epistle to the Colossians", *Polemik in der frühchristlichen Literatur* (eds. O. WISCHMEYER – L. SCORNAIENCHI) (Berlin – New York 2011) 262.

¹⁷ They underscore that Pauline letters are not addressed to individuals but to a larger public. For this reason we cannot compare them to a conversation between friends, but rather to the rhetorical genus of an argumentation. F. SCHNIDER – W. STENGER, *Studien zum neutestamentlichen Briefformular* (NTTS; Leiden 1987) 50–52.

¹⁸ W.H. WUELLNER, "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans: An

F. Schnider and W. Stenger proceed by generalizing Wuellner's premises and applying them to the undisputed letters. They set the boundaries of the section termed "self-recommendation" (*Selbstempfehlung*) by combining two criteria: formal epistolary marks¹⁹ and the rhetorical function of the section²⁰. However, many of the epistolary marks mentioned do not really delimit introductory sections; see, for example, some negative and positive formulas of knowledge (Rom 7,1; 1 Cor 15,1). The same observation is valid for report formulas (Rom 11,25; 1 Cor 10,1; 12,1). We also find a very arguable case in Gal 1,8-10.11: according to Schnider and Stenger, 1,8-10 functions as self-recommendation and 1,11 opens the epistolary corpus. But we do not see any formal marks in 1,8-10 to delimit an introduction, and we could hardly read the report formula in 1,11 separately from the preceding text²¹.

After close examination, we cannot avoid some questions: is it methodologically correct to generalize Wuellner's remarks on Romans to apply to all the undisputed letters? Do we find a clear-cut section in all Pauline letters functioning as self-introduction?²² Are not Schnider and Stenger imposing a rhetorical scheme (mainly W.J. Brandt's outline) on all Pauline letters? Turning our attention to Wolter's study on Colossians, we raise two questions: does his qualification of 1,24-2,5 as self-presentation correspond to the train of thought of the section? Does Col 1,24-2,5 have the rhetorical function of recalling the sender's (Pauline) authority?

Alternative to the Donfried-Karris Debate over Romans", *CBQ* 38 (1976) 336; see also W.J. BRANDT, *The Rhetoric of Argumentation* (Indianapolis, IN 1970) 218-219.

¹⁹ The vocative ἀδελφοί + negative and positive formulas of knowledge: οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν (Rom 1,13; 2 Cor 1,8); γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς (Phil 1,12) / αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε (1 Thes 2,1); formulas of exhortation παρακαλῶ (1 Cor 1,10; Phlm 10). See SCHNIDER – STENGER, *Studien zum neutestamentlichen Briefformular*, 54.

²⁰ That is, turning the attention of the readers / hearers to the speaker's authority.

²¹ In Gal 1,11 the γάρ is there to explain Gal 1,10, that is, why the apostle does not seek to please human beings.

²² See the whole critique and several examples of incorrect delimitation in the undisputed letters in J.-N. ALETTI, "La dispositio de Colossiens. Enjeux exégétiques et théologiques", «*Il verbo di Dio è vivo*». *Studi sul Nuovo Testamento* (FS A. VANHOYE, S.I.) (eds. J.E. AGUILAR CHIU – F. MANZI – F. URSO – C. ZESATI ESTRADA) (AnBib 165; Roma 2007) 323-336.

2. Rhetorical Pattern

C.H. Talbert presents a complete summary of the interpretations regarding the structure of 1,24–2,5. Trying to find a pattern in harmony with the content, he puts forward a concentric structure already suggested by some scholars ²³:

- A I am now rejoicing (1,24)
- B make known, mystery, riches, mystery = Christ (1,25-28)
- C I struggle (1,29)
- C' I am struggling (2,1)
- B' riches, knowledge, mystery = Christ (2,2-4)
- A' I rejoice (2,5)

The natural delimitation of the unit according to its contents goes from 1,24 to 2,5 and is confirmed by the inclusion of χαίρω (1,24; 2,5) and the struggling motif (1,29; 2,1). However, for the sake of brevity I am limiting this part of the research to the first part of the aforementioned pattern. The study of the chosen section (1,24-29) reveals two main characteristics: the rhetorical devices of accumulation and reversal. A quick look at the syntactic arrangement can better illustrate our remark.

<p>A. Paul's sufferings & Christ's afflictions (1st singular)</p>	<p>²⁴ Νῦν χαίρω ἐν τοῖς παθήμασιν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ ἀνταναπληρῶ τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν θλίψεων τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐκκλησία, ²⁵ ἧς ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ διάκονος</p>
<p>B. Service & Word of God</p>	<p>κατὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ,</p>

²³ C.H. Talbert considers that the main function of the section is to establish the author's Pauline authority by means of inoffensive self-praise. In this particular case his options are guided by content rather than syntax. C.H. TALBERT, *Ephesians and Colossians* (Grand Rapids, MI 2007) 199-200.

C. Revelation of the mystery	²⁶ τὸ μυστήριον τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν – νῦν δὲ ἐφανερώθη τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ,
C'. Recipients & content of the mystery	²⁷ οἷς ἠθέλησεν ὁ θεὸς γνωρίσαι τί τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τοῦ μυστηρίου τούτου ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ὃ ἐστὶν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς δόξης·
B'. Proclamation	²⁸ ὃν ἡμεῖς καταγγέλλομεν νουθετοῦντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον καὶ διδάσκοντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ, ἵνα παραστήσωμεν πάντα ἄνθρωπον τέλειον ἐν Χριστῷ·
A'. Paul's labor & struggling (1 st singular)	²⁹ εἰς ὃ καὶ κοπιῶ ἀγωνιζόμενος κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐν δυνάμει

The syntax in 1,24 shows an accumulation of prepositional phrases: ἐν τοῖς παθήμασιν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν and ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ. One can also notice here the pattern: verb + ἐν (dative) + ὑπέρ (genitive). In 1,25-26 the phrase ἥς ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ διάκονος is amplified by the prepositional phrases with κατὰ and εἰς. See the duplication of ἀπό in 1,26. See also in 1,29 the construction εἰς ὃ + κατὰ + ἐν ²⁴.

The accumulation of relative phrases is also a main feature of the section. See for example ὃ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐκκλησία at the end of 1,24 which takes up the previous σῶμα, while the last term (ἐκκλησία) is further developed by the next phrase ἥς ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ διάκονος. Another sequence of relative clauses is found in 1,27: the phrase οἷς ἠθέλησεν ὁ θεὸς γνωρίσαι amplifies the previous τοῖς ἁγίοις and at the end of the verse the expression ὃ ἐστὶν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν refers back to μυστήριον. See ὃν in 1,28 which surely expands the previous Χριστός.

²⁴ See another example of accumulation of prepositional phrases in 2,2: ἵνα + ἐν + εἰς (2x).

The referent of ὅ in 1,29 is much less clear. It could refer back to the last final clause: “so that we may present everyone mature (perfect) in Christ. For this (purpose) I labor [...]” (NRS). It is also possible to consider the whole section as a result: “And it is for these reasons that I labor [...]” (NJB). An insightful reading relates the relative here to the last singular neuter noun of the section, i.e. the μυστήριον (1,27) and its expanded contents (1,27b-28)²⁵. This exegetical option will be corroborated by the semantic reversal of the textual unity.

The rhetorical technique of accumulation also involves the participial phrases. See, for example, the attributive participles in 1,25 (τὴν δοθεῖσαν); 1,26 (τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον); 1,29 (τὴν ἐνεργουμένην). One must notice also the adverbial function of the circumstantial – modal participles in 1,28 (νουθετοῦντες and διδάσκοντες) and 1,29 (ἀγωνιζόμενος)²⁶.

Such evidence raises the question of the aim of accumulation²⁷. The last remark concerning the syntax of participles offers a partial answer. All attributive participles in this section are appositional, expanding the semantics of the respective nouns. The adverbial participles perform a similar function. They enhance and explain the modality of their leading verbs. Accumulation functions in the section as a technique of semantic development, i.e. increasing meanings and expanding their contents.

²⁵ ALETTI, *Lettera ai Colossesi*, 134.

²⁶ The circumstantial participle (*coniunctum*) agrees with the subject of the leading verb in gender, number and case. F. BLASS – A. DEBRUNNER – W. FUNK, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge 1961) §§ 418, 421; H.W. SMYTH, *Greek Grammar* (Revised by G.M. MESSING) (Cambridge, MA 1984) § 2056.

²⁷ H. LAUSBERG distinguishes between coordinating, subordinating accumulation and polysyndeton. The first is the addition of phrases that are syntactically and semantically co-ordinated with one of the phrases set in act (§ 666) (for example, enumeration and distribution). The second is an attributive addition (adjective, substantive and periphrastic appositions) to a substantive, generally designated as epithet (§ 676). Polysyndeton is characterized by repetition of the same conjunction or accumulation of several conjunctions (§ 686). See H. LAUSBERG, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*. A Foundation for Literary Study (ed. D.E. ORTON – R.D. ANDERSON) (Leiden 1998) §§ 665-687. Accumulation in Col 1,24-29 does not seem to function as simple repetition of synonyms, but as syntactic and semantic enrichment. In this sense, it makes use of subordinating accumulation rather than coordinating.

This Christ, whose semantic content has been linked with the vocabulary of mystery and glory, is taken up again in the next phrase (1,28) by the relative clause (ὃν ἡμεῖς καταγγέλλομεν) and becomes the object of the apostolic proclamation. After that, the relative phrase in 1,29 (εἰς ὃ) refers back once again to the mystery and amplifies the purpose of its proclamation ³².

Both the syntactic accumulation and the semantic reversal focus on the notion of μυστήριον, explaining its revelation and its contents. It is also important to notice that after centering the reader's attention on this category, the line of thought moves toward its announcement, qualifying its pedagogy (νουθετοῦντες and διδάσκοντες) and its universal range (πάντα ἄνθρωπον). Now the question is: what does the expression πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ mean within this line of thought?

First, in 1,25-26 μυστήριον is in apposition to λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, thus equating the word of God and the revealed mystery. If the word of God is to be brought to completion, then the mystery must also. Second, the line of thought does not suggest that the mystery is incomplete. Rather it is a mystery already revealed in Christ but still to be fully proclaimed. Third, the previous remark as well as the mention of πληρόω in Rom 15,14-19, together with several lexical similarities³³, have been considered by many scholars enough evidence to interpret πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ as a universal broadcasting of God's message. Nevertheless, the train of thought in 1,24-29 seems to go further in the description of preaching the mystery.

Preaching the mystery's contents includes not only the announcement, pedagogical attitude and universal extent of proclaiming Christ, but also the qualification of its ethical purpose. In fact the ἵνα clause in 1,28 constitutes an interpretive key for a better understanding of the semantic enrichment of Christ's mystery: its purpose is to present everyone as mature in Christ.

In 1,28 the first person plural of παρίστημι (also καταγγέλλω) should be read as *pluralis maiestatis* referring to Paul: the same as the first person singular (ἐγώ) in 1,24-25.29. The verb παρίστημι could be interpreted in two different senses: (a) presenting a litur-

³² Our remark corroborates that the closest referent of εἰς ὃ in 1,29 is the relative phrase ὃ ἐστὶν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν (1,27c), which refers back to mystery, rather than πάντα ἄνθρωπον τέλειον in 1,28c.

³³ See νουθετέω (15,14); τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι (15,15); τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ (15,16.19); ἐθνη, (15,18).

gical (sacrificial) offering ³⁴; (b) introducing a juridical and/or ethical purpose ³⁵. The immediate context of 1,28 speaks in favor of the second. The expression ἄνθρωπος τέλειος sometimes translated as “perfect man” probably does not mean individual perfection, but maturity in Christ. The same expression in Eph 4,13 confirms its ethical nuance and its main feature as a growing process: in order to reach the maturity in Christ one needs to grow in the knowledge of Christ and unity of faith, i.e. “to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit” (Eph 4,3).

At the end of Colossians one can also find a similar line of thought as part of an intercessory final report (4,12b): ἵνα σταθῇτε τέλειοι καὶ πεπληροφορημένοι ἐν παντί θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ.

3. Πληρώω in Col 1,9

The ethical nuance of the fulfillment of God’s word had been already intimated in a similar structure of the letter. Within the section 1,9-14 the verb πληρώω functions almost in the same way as in 1,25. In 1,9-12 the intercessory report presents the following arrangement:

Transition & Intercessory report	⁹ Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφ’ ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσαμεν οὐ πανόμεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι	
Report’s purpose	Cognitive	ἵνα πληρωθῇτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ,
	Ethical	¹⁰ περιπατήσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν,
Modal expansions	(a)	ἐν παντί ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ καρποφοροῦντες
	(b)	καὶ αὐξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ,
	(c)	¹¹ ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι κατὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν.
	(d)	Μετὰ χαρᾶς ¹² εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ τῷ ἱκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί.
Theological & Christological expansions	¹³ ὃς ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους καὶ μετέστησεν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ, ¹⁴ ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν.	

³⁴ See, for example, Rom 12,1-2. Most of these “sacrificial” references (including verbs λατρεύω or λειτουργέω) echo back to the liturgical services in the OT. See, for example, Num 16,19; Deut 10,8; 18,5,7.

³⁵ See, for example, Rom 14,10; see also the ethical nuance in Col 1,22.

The syntax is characterized here by prepositional and participial accumulation amplifying and enriching the semantics, in this particular case, of the intercessory report's purpose. In 1,9b-10a the phrase "so that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" is further expanded by an ethical purpose: "to live in a way worthy of the Lord, pleasing him in all". The participial and prepositional phrases that follow in 1,10b-12 (see figure above: a b c d) amplify and explain this ethical finality.

The train of thought in the section then seems to be this: intercessory report + cognitive purpose + ethical finality. Within this progression πληρώω (passive) means to be filled with something, i.e. with knowledge. However, the most important assertion is different: receiving this knowledge leads to living according to the Lord, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God. Briefly, using πληρώω to describe the purpose of Paul's intercession in favor of believers also has an ethical nuance.

The recent debate on Pauline epistolary introductions has been focused on the source and function of both the *valetudinis* formula and the introductory thanksgiving (εὐχαριστῶ formula). Some authors have rightly suggested that only the Deuteropauline letters combine thanksgiving reports and intercessory prayer reports³⁶. In Col 1,9, for example, the expression διὰ τοῦτο picks up the content of the previous thanksgiving and becomes the reason for the Pauline intercession³⁷.

³⁶ See, in this sense, the temporal compounds of the reports in Col 1,3b.9a: πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι and ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἡκούσαμεν.

³⁷ See the discussion in the following: S.E. PORTER – S.A. ADAMS, *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form* (Pauline Studies 6; Leiden 2010) 33-100; J.T. REED, "Are Paul's Thanksgivings Epistolary?", *JSNT* 61 (1996) 87-99; P. ARZT, "The Epistolary Introductory Thanksgiving", *NT* 36 (1994) 29-46; J.L. WHITE, "Saint Paul and the Apostolic Letter Tradition" *CBQ* 45 (1983) 433-444; G.P. WILES, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers: The Significance of the Intercessory Prayer Passages in the Letters of St Paul* (MSSNTS 24; Cambridge 1974); J.T. SANDERS, "The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus", *JBL* 81 (1962) 348-362; P. SCHUBERT, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings* (BZNW; Giessen 1939).

III. The Use of πληρώ in Colossians

G. Delling's analysis distinguishes five non-literal senses of πληρώ in the NT: (1) "to fill with a content"; (2) "to fulfill a divine command"; (3) "to fill up a specific measure"; (4) "to fulfill prophetic sayings"; (5) "to complete," meaning "to finish", "to perform" or "to bring to completion"³⁸. An analysis of the recurrences of πληρώ in Colossians indicates mainly two senses³⁹, which could correspond well with numbers (1) and (5) in Delling's classification⁴⁰.

The first sense points to filling someone with something "abstract" (1,9; 2,10). In 1,9 the passive voice becomes surely a divine passive indicating that you (believers) are filled by God with God's will. In 2,10 the complementary passive participle designates "you" (believers) who in Christ have been filled with the divinity that dwells bodily in Christ (2,9); for this reason they have come to (divine) fullness in Christ. The second sense involves the idea of ethical fulfillment (1,25; 4,17). In 1,25 bringing to completion the word of God means that this word still needs something "abstract" to be complete. This "something" includes not only the knowledge of its content (the mystery) and its being spread worldwide, but also its ethical fulfillment or completion. In 4,17 the abstract object that needs to be brought to completion or to be fulfilled is apostolic service (διακονία). In both cases how it is to be fulfilled involves the proclamation, but certainly also its accomplishment in terms of the believer's behavior.

At this point it is difficult to avoid the question of the relation between the verb and its derivative noun πλήρωμα⁴¹. The study of

³⁸ G. DELLING, "πληρώ", *TDNT* 868-869.

³⁹ Our research has not dealt with etymology or extra-biblical references to determine the meaning of a phrase or expression, but rather their use in the letter, in particular within the syntactic units. Unfortunately we do not have room here to assess the merits of this methodological option. On determining meaning and sense by their use within the context see J. BARR, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London 1961).

⁴⁰ The recurrences of πληρώ in Ephesians could also fit into Delling's categories (1) and (5) but present for more difficulties of interpretation. They seem to move slightly toward a different completion, probably Christological and cosmological fulfillment. See J. DUPONT, *Gnosis: la connaissance religieuse dans les Épîtres de Saint Paul* (Bruges 1949) 471-476.

⁴¹ W. Schenk observes that the lexemes from πληρ-, including πληροφορία (2,2); πληροφορέω (4,12); ἀναπληρώ (1,24), characterize the specific vo-

this term in the letter has mainly focused on two issues: (a) whether the sense of the word is technical or non-technical; (b) whether the term is passive or active.

The active meaning would indicate that the fullness fills something, whereas the passive would point to a plenitude filled with something. τὸ πλήρωμα generally carries a passive meaning in the NT⁴². Both references in Colossians (1,19; 2,9) seem to designate the divine fullness. In 2,9 the objective genitive (τῆς θεότητος) confirms the content of the fullness; but in 1,19 the semantic content of the word is not that clear. Despite the absence of the genitive, it is possible to explain the omission of mentioning the divinity as a rhetorical device to focus the reader's attention on Christ's mediation and to underline his uniqueness among all creatures⁴³.

The technical sense of πλήρωμα refers to cosmic fullness, either the world filled with God, or God filled with the world in the way that this plenitude was understood by Stoicism⁴⁴. The non-technical sense alludes to something indeterminate. P. Benoit suggested that such plenitude refers to the church, the divinity and even the cosmos, including the fullness of God and of the church in Christ⁴⁵ with both united in him. In this sense, he prefers the technical reading of the word. However, it is important to observe that Colossians (in particular 1,15-20) avoids merging τὰ πάντα and Christ, in order to keep the role of Christ as the unique mediator. This plenitude in Colossians, which dwells in Christ and which refers to God, is hardly identified with the church⁴⁶.

cabulary of the letter. SCHENK, "Der Kolosserbrief in der neueren Forschung", 3332. The related vocabulary in the letter certainly confirms the semantics of the fulfillment: the knowledge of the divine will needs full achievement.

⁴² A few exceptions can be found in Mark 2,21 and 1 Cor 10,26 (cf. Ps 23,1), referring to the fullness of something (for example, unshrunk cloth and the earth).

⁴³ J.M. GRANADOS ROJAS, *La reconciliación en la Carta a los Efesios y en la Carta a los Colosenses*: estudio exegetico de Ef 2,14-16 y Col 1,20.21-23 (AnBib 170; Roma 2008) 152.

⁴⁴ DUPONT, *Gnosis*, 461-468.

⁴⁵ P. BENOIT, "Corps, Tête et Plérôme dans les Épîtres de la Captivité", *Exégèse et Théologie* (Paris 1961) 139-145. See also J. ERNST, *Pleroma und Pleroma Christi*: Geschichte und Deutung eines Begriffs der paulinischen Antilegomena (BU; Regensburg 1970) 71-93.

⁴⁶ This is totally different from Ephesians' interpretation of the πλήρωμα. See, for example, Eph 1,21-23. Further research on the links between the vocabulary of πληρώω and πλήρωμα in Ephesians and Colossians remains to be done. See P. POKORNÝ, *Colossians*: A Commentary (Peabody MA 1991) 100.

In summary, the rhetorical pattern in Col 1,24-29 shows that bringing to completion the word of God (πληρώω) includes its ethical achievement, that is, making everyone mature in Christ. The result of such πληρώω does not consist only in a human person being filled with the knowledge of the gospel or plenitude of God's will, but in a creature transformed by the knowledge of the mystery of Christ. According to this reading, we prefer the passive and non-technical sense of the πλήρωμα in Colossians: the divine fullness includes its effects upon Christ and all creatures in him.

* *

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By studying the rhetorical pattern in Col 1,24-29, in particular the techniques of accumulation and reversal, we have evinced the semantics of the section. We have focused on the meaning of πληρώω. However, the train of thought might also clarify other issues in Col 1,25. For example: (1) We do not really have two different kinds of service here, because being διάκονος of the universal church involves universal preaching, teaching, and ethical purpose, i.e. service to the gospel. (2) Here the meaning of οἰκονομία is related to the mystery of Christ; it is hardly about an institutional commission, but rather about the divine purpose of making everybody perfect or mature in Christ.

Is the word of God incomplete? According Col 1,25 the word of God needs completion. Based on the parallel text of Rom 15,19 many commentators consider that the phrase πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ has spatial meaning, i.e. preaching the gospel to the gentiles⁴⁷. We agree with other scholars that such a completion has not only spatial meaning but also a qualitative one. Yet, our research has gone further⁴⁸. What kind of quality is this? Our short answer

⁴⁷ See R. ASTING, *Die Verkündigung des Wortes im Urchristentum*: dargestellt an den Begriffen "Wort Gottes", "Evangelium" und "Zeugnis" (Stuttgart 1939) 138.

⁴⁸ Our study stays within the limits of its purpose. For this reason, we leave other related questions for further studies, e.g. why limit the analysis to Col 1,24-29, excluding the following unit (2,1-5); or why omit the semantic analysis of πληρώω (and also πλήρωμα) in Ephesians or even in the undisputed letters? These limits are imposed also by a methodological approach beginning with syntactical arrangement, rather than with semantic content.

comes down to this: the quality is ethical. Indeed, the rhetorical pattern in Col 1,24-29 has shown that “bringing to completion the word of God” includes both the diffusion of the gospel and the achievement of its ethical purpose.

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SUMMARY

The common reading of πληρώ in Col 1,25 has emphasized the apostolic task of preaching the gospel everywhere. We agree with other scholars that such a completion has not only spatial meaning but also a qualitative one. Yet, our research goes further: what kind of quality is this? The rhetorical devices of “accumulation” and “reversal” combined in 1,24-29 point to an ethical purpose. In this sense, “bringing to completion the word of God” means preaching the word, but also making everyone mature in Christ. The phrase includes both the diffusion of the gospel and the achievement of its ethical purpose.

“Divine Nature” in 2 Pet 1,4 within its Eschatological Context

2 Peter 1,4b presents the main point of the epistle’s opening argument by signaling the purpose of redemption: ἵνα διὰ τούτων [τὰ ἐπαγγέλματα, 1,4a] γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως. In so doing, this ἵνα clause also introduces the purpose of the letter as a whole, thereby providing a *crux interpretum* for its reading¹. Far beyond its place within 2 Peter, however, the theological import of this text has played a key role both in the reconstruction of early Christianity and within the doctrinal development of the church. In the former case, it has been taken to signal an apparently later, Hellenistic development within the primitive Christian movement; in the latter, it eventually becomes an authoritative proof text for the concept of *theosis*². The two perspectives come together in E. Käsemann’s judgment, for whom 2 Pet 1,4 represents a “relapse of Christianity into Hellenistic dualism”, in which “apotheosis is [man’s] true destiny. This is what the mystics and Gnosis promise him. But, according to our epistle, this is exactly what the Christian kerygma promises him also”³.

I. The Ontological Reading of φύσις in 2 Peter 1,4b

Central to understanding this programmatic text is the meaning of φύσις itself, which was presupposed in 2 Peter as common ground between author and audience. Recovering this ground from our distance has been made more difficult, however, by the common impres-

¹ For the role of 2 Pet 1,3-11 within 2 Peter, see S.J. HAFEMANN, “Salvation in Jude 5 and the Argument of 2 Peter 1:3-11”, *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition* (eds. K.-W. NIEBUHR – R.W. WALL) (Waco, TX 2009) 339-342, 480-482.

² For an overview of its reception-history, see A. VÖGTLE, *Der Judasbrief / Der 2. Petrusbrief* (EKKNT 22; Solothurn / Neukirchen-Vluyn 1994) 145-148, *Partakers of the Divine Nature. The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (eds. M.J. CHRISTENSEN – J.A. WITTUNG) (Grand Rapids, MI 2008) and the paradigmatic “exchange formula” in Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5 and Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* 54.

³ E. KÄSEMANN, “An Apologia for Primitive Christian Eschatology”, *Essays on New Testament Themes* (SBT 41; Naperville, IL 1964) 179-180.

sion, supported by contemporary translations, that φύσις in 2 Pet 1,4 refers to a static, divine "essence", "identity", or ontological "being", as if it were a synonym for οὐσία⁴. Many commentators consequently assume that the reference to the "divine nature" connotes the quality of the divine essence as incorrupt, immortal, rational, or spiritual (i.e., non-physical). In view of v. 4c, sharing in this divine nature is therefore a result of escaping the physical world corrupted by desire⁵. This takes place either at death (cf. 2 Pet 1,12-15) or by means of cultivating one's own inherent, immortal, rational faculties as represented in the virtue-catalog that immediately follows in vv. 5-7.

This ontological view of φύσις has led to three dualistic interpretations of the phrase θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως:

as a reference to partaking in divine immortality, permanence, and incorruptibility as a result of escaping the transient and corrupt existence of this material world, either at death or at the Parousia (a primarily dualistic reading focused exclusively on the future)⁶; as a reference to participating in God's/Christ's immortality or incorruptibility, either at death or at the Parousia, as well as referring to taking on God's or Christ's moral character now (cf. 1,3 with 1,5-7), both of which take place as a result of escaping the moral corruption of this world (an inaugurated-eschatological reading)⁷;

⁴ See (*divinae*) *naturae*, Vg.; "God's kind", *The Wycliffe New Testament* (1388) (ed. W.R. COOPER) (London 2002), 477; "(divine) nature", NRSV, TNIV, ESV, etc.; "die (göttliche) Natur", *Luther, Einheitsübersetzung*; "nature (divine)", *La Sainte Bible*; "θεία φύσις", *New Testament in Modern Greek* (1939), *New Testament in Today's Greek Version* (1989).

⁵ See J.R. LENZ, "Deification of the Philosopher in Classical Greece", *Partakers*, 60, who sees 2 Pet 1,4 to be an "echo" of Platonic language and a parallel to Platonic "sentiment," so that "philosophical paganism and Christianity often meet metaphysically" (LENZ, "Deification", 61).

⁶ In addition to Käsemann, see, e.g., T.V. SMITH, *Petrine Controversies in Early Christianity* (WUNT II.15; Tübingen 1985) 95-96 and, among the many commentaries, R.J. BAUCKHAM, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC 50; Waco, TX 1983) 181, though not as a participation in God, but "in the nature of heavenly, immortal beings" like God, and VÖGTLE, *Petrusbrief*, II, 140, though not, contra Käseman and Smith, as a *Rückfall* into Hellenistic dualism but as an example of inculturation.

⁷ See J. CALVIN, *The Epistle of Paul The Apostle to the Hebrews and The First and Second Epistles of St. Peter* (Calvin's New Testament Commentaries; Grand Rapids, MI 1963) 330, T. SCHREINER, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (NAC; Nashville, TN 2003) 290, 292-294, and, most significantly, J. STARR, *Sharers*

as a reference to experiencing God's presence and/or taking on God's/Christ's moral character now as a result of already escaping the moral corruption of this world in this life (an experiential and/or ethical reading focused fundamentally on the present)⁸.

The only serious challenge to these traditional approaches has come from Al Wolters' covenantal reading of the text⁹. Wolters argues that *θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως* refers to being "partners of the Deity" in God's covenant as a result of having been *acquitted* of the corruption of the fallen world brought about through sinful desire. As the crux of his argument, Wolters maintains that *θεία φύσις*, like the designations *θεία δύναμις* (2 Pet 1,3) and *μεγαλοπρεπὴς δόξα* (2 Pet 1,17), is a substitute description of God as a person, meaning "divine being" or "deity", and not a reference to the "divine nature" as an abstract entity. He points out that *φύσις* can be used concretely to refer to a creature or entity (cf. Plato, *Tim.* 42c; 3 *Macc* 3,29; James 3,7, etc., as part of 100 such extant, concrete uses) and that it can also refer to the supreme deity directly (cf. Philo, *Fug.* 172; *Mos.* 2.65; *Migr.* 139, *Spec.* 1.318 [substituting for "the Lord your God" in Deut 14,1!]). In Philo, *Spec.* 3.178 and *Abr.* 144 (cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 8.107) the exact phrase *θεία φύσις* is used for the biblical God, thereby providing further parallels to the meaning "divine being" or "deity" proposed for 1,4¹⁰.

Wolters has demonstrated that recognizing the covenant context of 2 Pet 1,4 makes important linguistic and theological contributions to understanding the passage. In particular, Wolters' construal cautions us not to separate the *θεία φύσις* in view from the personal *θεός* it signifies, which has led to the phrase wrongly being interpreted as a static abstraction in reference to a divine "being", "essence", or "quality". Moreover,

in Divine Nature. 2 Peter 1,4 in Its Hellenistic Context (ConB 33; Stockholm 2000) 49, 65, 185, 189, 215, 220, 232-233.

⁸ Strongly represented in the 19th and early 20th century commentaries, focusing on participation in the Spirit or union with Christ, e.g., J.T. BECK, *Petrus-briefe. Ein Kommentar* (Gießen, 1895) 242-244, and J.B. MAYOR, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter* (London, 1907) 190; more recently, see F.W. DANKER, "2 Peter 1: A Solemn Decree", *CBQ* 40 (1978) 71.

⁹ "Partners of the Deity": A Covenantal Reading of 2 Peter 1:4", *CTJ* 25 (1990) 28-46, and "Postscript to 'Partners of the Deity'", *CTJ* 26 (1990) 418-420; he is now followed by R.A. REESE, *2 Peter & Jude* (The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI 2007) 133, 135.

¹⁰ WOLTERS, "Partners", 34-37.

Wolters correctly construes κοινωνός in 1,4 as a reference to a person who shares rather than to the act of sharing itself. When employed with a personal noun in the genitive case, κοινωνός generally means “partner”; otherwise it means “partaker”. The former meaning is likewise signified when the thing in view represents a person, as φύσις does here. This is illustrated in 1 Cor 10,18, where the reference to κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου refers not to being a “partaker” of the altar itself, but to being a “partner” with the altar, which here functions as a metonymy for God. Read in this way, θεία φύσις is a “reverential periphrasis” for “God” (so Bigg), as part of 2 Peter’s “grand style” (Watson) or “baroque Asianism” (Reicke, Bauckham, E. M. Green), which employs elaborate constructions, unusual terms, and periphrastic descriptions ¹¹.

Over against Wolters’ reading however, the parallel designations in 1,3 and 1,17, rather than being substitute designations for the “Deity” or references to God’s “being” (οὐσία), refer to specific characteristics of God, which are expressed in divine actions ¹². As the use of αὐτοῦ in 2 Peter 1,3 indicates, θεία δύναμις αὐτοῦ refers to the power of God displayed in accordance with his promises, while μεγαλοπρεπῆς δόξα in 1,17 refers in context to the presence of God that establishes the royal and judicial status of Jesus as the Son. In contrast, if θεία φύσις in 1,4 were intended to be a reverential substitution for God’s name, it would function merely as a rhetorically “empty” periphrasis for God himself (the “Deity”), ironically continuing the abstract interpretation Wolters rightly rejects. Rather than being a periphrasis for God, the designation in 1,4, like the designations of 1,3 and 1,17, is significant as such and should be read as a further reference to God. Indeed, the meaning of φύσις itself in 1,4 calls into question the attempt to read θεία φύσις either as a statement of the ontological being of God or simply as another “name” for God himself.

¹¹ So WOLTERS, “Partners”, 30-31, 34, 38, 40, who points out that κοινωνός is always used, with only one exception from Euripides, as a noun (“sharer”, “partaker”, “companion”, “partner”), not as an adjective (cf. 1 Cor 10,20; 2 Cor 1,7; 1 Pet 5,1; Luke 5,10; Heb 10,33, etc.), and, following Watson, lists eight examples of this periphrastic style in chapter one alone, esp. when speaking of God.

¹² Cf., e.g., Philo, *Fug.* 97, which speaks of God as “the creative power” (ἡ ποιητικὴ δύναμις) in line with the play on words between θεός and the verb τίθημι, since Philo wants to emphasize that “God” established and ordered the universe: θεός ἐπειδὴ δι’ αὐτῆς [i.e., ἡ δύναμις] ἐτέθη καὶ διεκοσμήθη τὰ σύμπαντα. In *Fug.* 164 God is described as “the cosmos-maker” (ὁ κοσμοποιός).

II. The “Philosophical” Context of φύσις

The use of φύσις in the ancient world has a long history and by the time of the first century a wide and diverse semantic range. Martens summarizes the “major strands of Greek thought on φύσις” to include “the power of life and growth . . . the particular characteristic of any thing or being . . . and φύσις as the inherent order and reason of the cosmos, seen *par excellence* in the νόμος φύσεως, but manifesting itself in every living thing”¹³. Although in specific contexts φύσις could be employed as a cognate to οὐσία (“being”, “essence”, “substance”) ¹⁴, its more common use was not as an abstract noun referring to a stative aspect of existence. Only under certain viewpoints, which were taken up primarily in philosophical discussions, does φύσις refer to Being (*das Sein*) as such (τὸ ὄν, ἡ οὐσία) ¹⁵. Though it is far from casual literature, 2 Pet 1,4 clearly does not belong to such a philosophical context. It stands in stark contrast, for example, to passages from Philo, such as *Fug.* 164-165 and *Abr.* 162-163, where Philo reflects on the difference between “nature” (φύσις) and “being” or “essence” (οὐσία), and *Spec.* 1.32, 36, 39-41, where he poses the question of the “essence” (οὐσία) of “the deity” (τὸ θεῖον).

Most often, φύσις was a verbal noun (*nomen actionis*) related to the verb φύω (“to grow”, “to bring forth”, “to put forth”, “to become”, etc.), which was used concretely of that which grows from the earth and metaphorically of anything that is produced ¹⁶. Used in relationship to the verb, φύσις can therefore designate “nature” in the sense of the character that is produced by a life or power, as well as signifying the fundamental way of being (*Seinsweise*) that is seen in what it produces. That is, φύσις designates “nature” in the sense of a way of being/acting that expresses itself in what it “grows”. Φύσις is either the expression

¹³ J.W. MARTENS, *One God, One Law*. Philo of Alexandria on the Mosaic and Greco-Roman Law (Studies in Philo of Alexandria 2; Boston, MA 2003) 67.

¹⁴ See LSJ, οὐσία, 1274, use II, and LENZ, “Deification”, 50, 63 n.13.

¹⁵ The discussion in this section follows the helpful outline of L. BRISSON, “Natur”, “Natur-philosophie”, *Der Neue Pauly* 8 (2000) 728-736.

¹⁶ Cf. LSJ, φύω, 1966-67; πεφύκω / πεφυκότως, 1398; φύσις, 1964-65. Thus, W.T. WILSON, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (CEJL; Berlin 2005) 119, comments on Ps-Phoc., *Sent.* 59-62 that φύω with the dative (“to fall to one by nature”) expressed “a generally held truth in Hellenistic culture about the human condition”, namely, that “nature” expressed itself, so that “people must respect the ‘natural’ limits imposed on their existence”.

of activity or that which expresses itself in activity, the character produced or the character that produces¹⁷. This is why “nature” was often identified with what could be perceived. Even for the Platonists, the four elements of the cosmos therefore emerge out of a prior “cosmic soul” or φύσις by virtue of “necessity” (ἀνάγκη), so that “nature” is seen as inexorably expressing itself in its corresponding actions¹⁸. The Neo-Platonists (and already the Middle-Platonists of the first century A.D.) reemphasized this identity between nature (φύσις) and necessity (ἀνάγκη) or destiny (εἰμαρμένη), the latter being the active result of the Zeus-made or crafted cosmic soul as the cause of all things. Far from static, this cosmic “nature” was the intermediate instrument by which all things came about¹⁹.

The Stoics rejected the Platonic metaphysics of a transcendent deity. Nevertheless, they too conceived of φύσις actively, now identified with the “right reason” (λόγος ὀρθός) that infused all things, so that “nature” could be identified with “god” itself, since φύσις was the dynamic, physical principle of all reality that held the universe together and caused all living creatures to grow (cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Vit.* 7.148; 7.156; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.8.3)²⁰. Everything that takes place is the expression of the perfect will of that perfect reason and so is the most provident thing that could happen. In fact, the Stoic view of nature as universal causality was so active and determinative that they too sought to clarify its meaning with the concepts of necessity (ἀνάγκη) and destiny (εἰμαρμένη).

We must be careful here. As Engberg-Pedersen stresses, although Stoics did not view “god” as personal, their depictions of nature with

¹⁷ See too ἐκ φύω in Mark 13,29 // Matt 24,32. For the continuation of these two uses of φύσις through the NT era, see *Barn.* 10,7 for “nature” as that which is produced and *Diogn.* 9,6 for “nature” as that which produces (see too, Ign. *Trall.* 1,1).

¹⁸ Cf. Aristotle, *Phys.* 2.I.192b 20-22; 3.I.200b 12; *Cael.* 301b 17-18; and *Metaph.* 12.1073a 25-30 for the “unmoved mover” (τὸ ὃ οὐ κινούμενον κινεῖ), who, for Aristotle, is God (θεός), the “metaphysical” reality. Cf. BRIS-SON, “Natur”, 730-731, for this point and supporting texts.

¹⁹ For the Middle Platonist view of “Weltbildung” rather than “Weltschöpfung”, see D.T. RUNIA, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* (Philosophia Antiqua 44; Leiden 1986) 53-54, 96, 435, 493-494. For a treatment of our themes in Plutarch (AD 45-125), who offers the only complete, albeit eclectic work of Middle Platonism, see STARR, *Divine Nature*, 120-143.

²⁰ So BRIS-SON, “Natur”, 732-733, who consequently refers to φύσις as a “Wachstum” (732); see also STARR, *Divine Nature*, 145-146, 150.

the attributes of perfect human rationality were not merely metaphorical, since they rejected the mechanistic view of nature held by the Epicureans²¹. “Nature in fact is animate and rational in a way that is at least comparable to the way in which a human being is this”; nature is a divine being in that it is perfectly rational, so that “god” is “the active principle of the world”²². Accordingly, when speaking of nature as god, the Stoics mean “consciousness and inflexible lawlikeness”²³. Since it was the determining source of all things, Stoics could also equate this active “nature” (φύσις) with the “law of nature” (νόμος φύσεως), according to which all things and people (ought to) live²⁴.

Even among the “scientific” perspective of the Epicureans, “nature”, as that which “is”, consisted of a visible, physical reality incorporating the tangible bodies, the invisible atoms, and the intangible void in which the atoms exist and “fall” to form visible reality (Epicurus, *Fr.* 75, 76; and Plutarch, *Mor.* 1112DE)²⁵. There was, moreover, an inextricable, often mechanistically deterministic link between the inner nature of the atoms, with their movement in the void, and the external nature or character of what is seen.

Of special relevance for our study is the fact that this link between “nature” and its corresponding actions led in the popular philosophy of the day, fueled above all by Stoicism, to the moral dictum of “living according to nature” (κατὰ φύσιν ζῆν; Lat. *secundum naturam vivere*)²⁶. “Damit reduziert sich Tugendhaftigkeit (ἀρετή, Lat. *virtus*)

²¹ TROELS ENGBERG-PEDERSEN, *The Stoic Theory of Oikeiosis*. Moral Development and Social Interaction in Early Stoic Philosophy (Studies in Hellenistic Civilization; Aarhus 1990) 59.

²² ENGBERG-PEDERSEN, *Stoic Theory*, 59.

²³ ENGBERG-PEDERSEN, *Stoic Theory*, 60.

²⁴ MARTENS, *One God*, 18–21. He points to Cicero, *Leg.* 1.18–19, 34; 2.13; 3.2–3; *Rep.* 3.33; *Parad.* 14; *N.D.* 34, 82, 86; *Off.* 1.98–100. Martens argues that the concept of the “law of nature” came to include the other concepts of φύσις as the power of life and growth and the particular characteristics of any thing or being (68, n. 1).

²⁵ LENZ, “Deification”, 56, 66 n.65, emphasizes that the Epicurean view of living like a god among men (cf. Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus* 135) was more than a metaphor, but implied a philosophical-religious view of the world in which reason applied to philosophy created a corresponding life of ethics and peace of mind.

²⁶ See, e.g., Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.21.2, who argued that contentment is found only if one exercises desire and aversion κατὰ φύσιν, i.e., exercising choice and refusal ὡς πέφυκα, since this is the only thing with its own moral purpose and power (cf. *Diatr.* 2.13.11; 3.3.1; 3.16.15; 3.23.12; 4.4.14, 28; etc.).

für den Menschen letztlich auf die Verwirklichung seiner wahren Natur und auf das Akzeptieren der Weltordnung, d.h. von 'allem, was der Natur entsprechend hervorgebracht ist' (τὸ κατὰ τὴν ὅλην φύσιν συμβαίνοντα)"²⁷.

III. Φύσις in Hellenistic Judaism

It is well known that Philo self-consciously sought to show the unity between biblical revelation and the best philosophies of his day. In line with the prevailing view of φύσις as the active, effective cause of its consequences, Philo consistently used "nature" to refer to the inherent character of a thing or being (human or supernatural) that expresses itself in word, desire, capability, and deed, whether good or bad²⁸. The characteristics and actions of all things and beings, including God, are an expression of their particular "nature" (φύσις) (cf. *Cher.* 19; *Opif.* 44). When used of God, it means that God creates out of his own good nature (φύσις), as the expression of his powers, which are "overwhelmingly vast" (αἱ δυνάμεις ὑπερβάλλουσι) (*Opif.* 21, 23; cf. the link between θεία φύσις and θεία δύναμις in 2 Pet 1,3-4). Instructive is *Spec.* 1.30, where Philo uses φύω to describe God, since "stability and fixity and lordship are by nature vested (πέφυκε) in Him alone" (LCL); as an expression of his nature, God is "the Framer and Maker of all things", "the Lord of created beings" (κτίστης καὶ ποιητὴς τῶν ὅλων, κύριος τῶν γεγονότων; LCL). In short, the divine nature is seen in what God does. Hence, God himself, as "the Deity" (τὸ θεῖον), can be identified as a "nature" (φύσις, *Leg.* 3.7, 84), as can creation (*Leg.* 3.7). For Philo, as for the Stoics, it is therefore φύσις

²⁷ BRISSON, "Natur", 734, referring to Diogenes Laertius, *Vit.* 7.105, 491; Plutarch, *Mor.* 1069e. Cf. also, ENGBERG-PEDERSEN, *Stoic Theory*, 58, and the texts he cites.

²⁸ See, e.g., *Her.* 234; *Opif.* 84; *Gig.* 30; *Agr.* 168 (here "nature" grants the gifts associated with virtue); *Plant.* 135; *Fug.* 14.22; *Abr.* 102 (for Philo, ἀρετή, though a feminine noun, must be masculine "by nature", since it causes movement and conditions); *Abr.* 275 ("nature" gave Abraham the zeal to obey God's unwritten law); *Ios.* 37-38; *Mos.* 1.83; 2.5; *Spec.* 3.173-176; etc. The exception highlights the rule: in *Decal.* 64 the consequence of action can be described as determining one's nature rather than the other way around, i.e., the heavenly bodies are said to be "by nature our brothers" (οἱ ἀδελφοὶ φύσει), since they too have been created.

that “guides people into reasonable and virtuous lives”, so that, as its corollary, Philo is the first extant Greek writer to speak so often of the νόμος φύσεως²⁹. Philo can therefore say that the Mosaic law guiding human behavior expresses the law of nature (cf. *Ebr.* 37; *Spec.* 2.129; 3.137). Conversely, the true life of serving the “God that is,” who is the oldest cause of all things, is “inscribed on the tablets of nature” (*Spec.* 1.31: ἐν ταῖς τῆς φύσεως στήλαις ἀναγράφεται). In short, the goal of life taught by philosophers was also taught by Moses (cf., e.g., *Migr.* 128). The unwritten truths in the law of nature lead to the same virtues written down in the law of Moses (*Mos.* 2.216)³⁰.

In this manner Philo combines the philosophical concept of “nature” found in both the Stoicism and Middle Platonism of his day with the biblical view of God as the transcendent creator and ruler of nature itself. Nevertheless, although Philo’s use of the language of λόγος and φύσις for God’s operation in the cosmos recalls Stoic theology, “Stoic ideas on pantheism and God’s corporeal nature are so obviously false that Philo hardly ever bothers to polemicize against them”³¹. From Philo’s own use of φύσις as part of his integration project, it is clear that Stoicism’s “emphasis on divine omnipresence and the divine activity of nature (φύσις) in the cosmos Philo finds deserving of incorporation in his own theological descriptions, provided they are understood as applying at the level of the divine Logos”³². Philo’s adaptation of the philosophical views

²⁹ MARTENS, *One God*, 75.

³⁰ Cf. MARTENS, *One God*, 21, 22, 28, 29, 84, 90, 91: on the one hand, in Stoicism the “law of nature” was viewed as inherent within nature and known only to the perfected reason of the sage (cf. Epictetus, *Diatr.* 4.7,34; Cicero, *Off.* 1.100; *Leg.* 2.11), and so was never equated with written laws (Cicero, *Leg.* 1.17, 42, 44; 2.13; *Off.* 3.69; *Rep.* 3.18; Seneca, *Ep.* 30; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.26.1-2; 4.3.11-12). On the other hand, Philo’s unique move, due to his commitment to the Torah, was to equate virtue with the unwritten law of nature (*Leg.* 3.245; *Post.* 185; *Abr.* 16), which is equated with reason, which is equated with Logos, which is equated with the law of God (*Spec.* 2.37), which is equated with the living law (νόμος ἑμψυχός) embodied in the king (*Abr.* 5).

³¹ RUNIA, *Philo*, 434.

³² RUNIA, *Philo*, 482-483. When it comes to the meaning of “nature” in a theological context, the function of the Logos, “representing the immanent presence of the divine in the cosmos, certainly corresponds to that of the cosmic soul in the Timaeus, now ‘modernized’ by the Stoic concept” (483, following Dillon).

of his day illustrates how an active view of φύσις as the source of human activity can be associated with God’s own nature as expressed in divine activity, both of which find expression in the law of created nature and in the laws of Moses.

The same active use of “nature” exhibited by Philo, being representative of Hellenistic Judaism³³, is consistently attested both in the LXX and in post-biblical Jewish literature. Φύσις occurs 12x in LXX, eight of which are in 4 Maccabees; θεῖος occurs 34x in LXX (or 35 if 4 Macc 12,12 is included), 24 of which (or 25 if 4 Macc 12,12 is included) are in 4 Maccabees, though the exact phrase θεῖα φύσις never occurs in the LXX. Since different “natures” entail distinct identities, one reads in 3 Macc 3,29 of “human nature” (θνητὴ φύσις), in 4 Macc 1,20 of two “natures of emotions” (παθῶν φύσεις), pleasure and pain, which “grow” (πεφύκειν), and in Wis 7,20 of the “natures of animals” (φύσεις ζώων). In Wis 13,1, all men who are ignorant of God are “foolish by nature” (μάταιοι φύσει) in that they are not able to see or to know him from his creation. In Wis 19,20, the nature of water is defined as its ability to quench fire (τῆς σβεστικῆς φύσεως). Even in the strongly Hellenized tradition of 4 Maccabees, φύσις is usually defined according to its actions as an expression of its identity. Thus, in 4 Macc 5,25, God shows sympathy in giving the law to us according to God’s nature (κατὰ φύσιν) as the one who acts in the best interest of his people (cf. 4 Macc 5,8.9; 13,27, 15,13; 16,3).

The non-fragmentary Greek Pseudepigrapha contain 18 references to φύσις. In *L.A.E.* 11.2, φύσις is used of the animals being changed (ἡμῶν φύσεις μετελλάγεσθαι) due to the fall of Eve, from once submitting to humanity as the image of God to now attacking Seth. The change in the animals’ φύσις is expressed in their changed actions, since their “nature” is not static but dynamic. In *T. Dan* 3.5, φύσις refers to what a person can normally accomplish without the added power and influence of anger. In *T. Naph.* 3.4-5, the readers are admonished not to become like Sodom, who, through her actions, departed from the order of her nature (ἵνα μὴ γένησθε ὡς Σόδομα ἥτις ἐνέλλαξε τάξιν φύσεως αὐτῆς), or like the Watchers, who likewise changed the order of their nature (καὶ οἱ ἐγγήγοροι ἐνέλλαξαν τάξιν φύσεως αὐτῶν) and were cursed at the flood. For this same definition of one’s φύσις in terms of one’s actions, see *T.*

³³ Cf., e.g., Josephus *A.J.* 8.107, where God’s omnipresent nature is emphasized, the expression of which is that God sees and hears all things.

Reub. 3.1,3; *T. Sol.* 4.5; *T. Job* 3.3; *Let. Aris.* 44.2; 56.3; 250.4. Significantly, *Let. Aris.* 257.5 states that God, “according to his nature” (κατὰ φύσιν), welcomes that which is humbled, and *Let. Aris.* 288.4 asserts that the best king is determined not by whether he has royal blood or not, but by how he acts toward his subjects, i.e., by what is best by nature (τὸν ἄριστον τῇ φύσει) as seen in his actions. *Liv. Pro.* (Daniel) 4.8 refers to the grass normally eaten by oxen becoming the food of human nature” (ἐγένετο ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως τροφή), i.e., becoming that which accords with what a person’s nature can eat and digest. If original, *Sib. Or.* 12.81 refers to Nero as a “terrible snake by nature” (φύσεως) due to his murderous ways³⁴. According to Ps-Phocylides, *Sent.* 125, every “nature” (φύσις) or “creature” has from God a “weapon” (i.e., a particular capacity or ability) that enables it to protect itself, here exhibiting the simple periphrastic use common also in Plato³⁵.

IV. Φύσις and the Eschatological Interpretation of 2 Peter 1,4b

The use of φύσις in profane, Jewish, and biblical texts shows that its reference to one’s character entailed the capacity to include the thoughts, words, or deeds inextricably linked with that character. The sense of φύσις is thus best understood to be “action-determined character”, or “character expressed in actions”, depending on whether the emphasis in the context lies on the actions determining “nature” or on “nature” as determining the actions. The latter view was clearly predominant in the popular philosophies of the culture, since in the ancient world one’s “nature” was widely viewed as the determining power of one’s life. This common understanding of φύσις corresponds both to the biblically informed world-view in general and to the context of 2 Pet 1,4 in particular. Ten of the eleven uses of φύσις in Paul and its two uses in Jas 3,7 confirm that the early church, like

³⁴ OTP, 447 n.o, in view of *Sib. Or.* 5.29, emends the text to read, “breathing grievous war”.

³⁵ So P.W. VAN DER HORST, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides, With Introduction and Commentary* (SVTP 4; Leiden 1978) 200. See also the statements concerning the nature of sexuality in *Sent.* 176, 187, 190, which WILSON, *Sentences*, 189, interprets in terms of the common reference to the “laws of nature” regarding sexuality in the ancient world, including Judaism (cf. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.12.7; Philo, *Contempl.* 59; Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.199).

the dominant culture of the day, often understood "nature" in a dynamic rather than static or abstract manner (see especially its use in explicit relation to the corresponding actions of one's nature in Rom 1,26; 2,14; 2,27; 1 Cor 11,14; Gal 2,15; Eph 2,3; see too σύμφυτος in Rom 6:5). Of special interest, therefore, is Gal 4,8, where the contrasting, ontological meaning is clearly marked, most likely because it goes against anticipated usage. There Paul uses the verb εἰμί to speak ontologically of being enslaved "to those not being gods by nature" (τοῖς φύσει μὴ οὖσιν θεοῖς), though even in this case what disqualifies them as gods is their nature-based actions, namely, that they cannot redeem those who serve them (cf. Gal 4,4-5). Hence, without such explicit ontological language, and in view of its own context, the semi-technical reference to θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως in 2 Pet 1,4 is best taken not as referring to divine "being" or "essence", or as a substitute title for God per se, but as a reference to God's dynamic character as expressed in the attitudes and/or actions that it brings forth or produces.

As a verbal noun with an inherently indefinite referent, the specific content of a being's "nature" must therefore be unpacked by the specific attitudes and/or actions in view contextually as the expression of that character. Hence, the use of θεία φύσις in 1,4 poses the question of what particular expression of God's character is in view, which would not have been raised had one of the personal designations, ὁ θεός, ὁ κύριος, or ὁ σωτήρ, employed elsewhere in 2 Peter (cf. 2 Pet 1,1-2.8), been used here. The answer lies close at hand. Contextually, the specific content of the θεία φύσις in view is clearly signaled by the twofold reference to the divine promises within 1,4 itself (τὰ ... ἐπαγγέλματα δεδώρηται, ἵνα διὰ τούτων γένησθε ...), which in turn are an expression of the θεία δύναμις in 1,3. The referent and rhetorical function of these promises, however, are both a matter of debate ³⁶.

Regarding their function, the most natural reading is to take the ἵνα clause of 1,4b as indicating purpose and to relate the instrumental διὰ τούτων to the most immediate possible antecedent, τὰ ἐπαγγέλματα ³⁷.

³⁶ B. REICKE's view, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude* (AB 37; Garden City, NY 1964) 153, that they are the promises granted at baptism, has gained few adherents, faltering on the lack of an explicit reference to baptism in 2 Peter and on the future-focus of the promises within the letter.

³⁷ So too, e.g., P.H. DAVIDS, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (PNT; Grand

The use of ἵνα to indicate purpose in 1,4b corresponds to its only other use in 2 Peter, in 3,17, where it clearly indicates purpose. This corresponds to the most common function of the subordinating particle, a usage found in all 13 instances of ἵνα in 1 Peter as well, where it is also clearly telic (1 Pet 1,7; 2,2.12.21.24; 3,1.9.16.18; 4,6.11.13; 5,6). The content of the promises is not that the believers may become fellow participants of the divine nature; instead, the promises have been bestowed on believers “in order that by means of these [promises]” they might become fellow participants of the divine nature.

Regarding the referent of the promises, the word choice for “promise” itself in 1,4 is rare. The noun ἐπάγγελμα does not occur in the LXX, the rest of the NT, or in the Apostolic Fathers; in contrast, ἐπαγγελία occurs 8x in the LXX and 52x in the NT³⁸. In contrast to the abstract, feminine form, ἐπαγγελία, which refers to a “promise” per se, the concrete, neuter form, ἐπάγγελμα is a *nomen rei actae* which refers to the content or result of what has been promised. Together with the use of the perfect verb in 1,4, δεδωρηται, it points to the “actuality” (*Tatsächlichkeit*) of what has been promised in regard to the author’s situation³⁹. Moreover, this use of the rare terminology for “promise” in 1,4 points forward to its striking repetition in 3,13, its only other use in the NT, as that which “neatly brackets the whole letter” (cf. the contrasting use of the common term, ἐπαγγελία, in 2 Pet 3,4.9)⁴⁰. As the counterpart to 3,13, anticipated in 2,19 by the use of its corresponding

Rapids, MI - Cambridge, 2006) 172 n.17. Contra BAUCKHAM, *2 Peter*, 179, who sees them as the promise of sharing in the divine nature itself, taking ἵνα in 1,4b to indicate content and διὰ τούτων as a resumption of the distant δι’ ὧν from v. 4a, which refers back to “glory and virtue” in 1,3. F. SPITTA, *Die zweite Brief des Petrus und der Brief des Judas* (Halle a. S. 1885) 52, takes the promises to refer to “all things pertaining to life and godliness” from 1,3, which is even more remote from the pronoun.

³⁸ For the wider use of ἐπάγγελμα, as related to the more common verbal form, ἐπαγγέλλομαι (used in 2 Pet 2,19, 13x in the LXX, and 15x in the NT; cf. προεπαγγέλλομαι, Rom 1,2; 2 Cor 9,5), see T.J. KRAUS, *Sprache, Stil und historischer Ort des zweiten Petrusbriefes* (WUNT II/136; Tübingen 2001) 324, who points to its use in Philo (9x), Josephus (2x) and non-Jewish literature; even then, he observes, it is used “relatively seldom (in comparison to its word-family)”.

³⁹ KRAUS, *Sprache*, 293, refers to the noun as “resultative”; i.e., ἐπαγγέλλω leads to ἐπάγγελμα as its result; cf. SPITTA, *Zweite Brief*, 48, and A. VÖGTLE, *2. Petrusbrief*, 139, who points out that the use of the perfect verb confirms this reading.

⁴⁰ DAVIDS, *2 Peter*, 171.

verbal form, ἐπαγγέλλομαι⁴¹, the referent of the promises in 1,4 is to what God, through Christ (cf. 2 Pet 1,11.16-21), intends to do eschatologically as summarized in 3,8-13. Specifically, the promises refer to the cosmic, divine judgment of the coming "day of God" at the end of the age (2 Pet 3,12)⁴². That the promises of 1,4 refer explicitly to the reality and consequences of Christ's *second* coming, not his first, is confirmed by the corresponding eschatological context of "the promise [as such] (ἐπαγγελία) of his coming (παρουσία)" in 2 Pet 3,4 and 9. The ἐπαγγέλματα (1,4; 3,13) unpack the ἐπαγγελία (3,4.9). The promise of Christ's second coming in 3,4 and 9, as a promise, is to be equated with the "prophetic word" concerning Christ's "power and parousia" in 2 Pet 1,16.19 and with "the words spoken before by the holy (OT) prophets" in 2 Pet 3,2 concerning "the day of the Lord" (3:10). Vögtle therefore suggests that ἐπαγγέλματα was used in 1,4 since ἐπαγγελίαι would have called to mind that the Parousia was promised (1:19), rather than referring to what actually happens at the Parousia as a result of these promises, which is the focus of 1:3-4⁴³.

In 1,4, the specific expression of the θεία φύσις is not defined. Yet, consonant with the dynamic meaning of φύσις as "character expressed in actions", God's "nature" is to be seen in his eschatological acts of redemption (cf. 3,7-13) as the demonstration of his divine power (1,3) in fulfillment of his promises (1,4). This outworking of God's "nature" as Savior (1,1) and Lord (1,2) expresses God's glory as displayed in his virtue, taking δόξη καὶ ἀρετῇ in 1,3 as one of 29 uses of a hendiadys in 2 Peter, in which the latter element further interprets the former⁴⁴.

⁴¹ Contra REESE, 2 *Peter*, 135, 197-198, who posits that the promises are not "spelled out" in 2 Peter itself and so turns to the NT as a whole for their content; she even contrasts the promises of 1,3 with those of chapter three (185); and L.R. DONELSON, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude* (NTL; Louisville, KY 2010) 219, who sees "no hint" in 2 Peter of which promises are meant, unless they refer to the other images in 1,4 itself.

⁴² So, too, many commentaries; see, e.g., J.N.D. KELLY, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (HNTC; Peabody, MA 1969/1988) 301 (pointing to 1,16; 3,4.9-10.12 and the concept of entrance into the kingdom); BAUCKHAM, 2 *Peter*, 179; W. SCHRAGE, *Die "Katholischen" Briefe. Die Briefe des Jakobus, Petrus, Johannes und Judas* (NTD 10; Göttingen¹³1985) 130; D. MOO, 2 *Peter and Jude* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids, MI 1996) 43, and, tentatively, B. WITHERINGTON III, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1-2 Peter* (Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians II; Downers Grove, IL 2007) 303.

⁴³ VÖGTLE, 2. *Petrusbrief*, 139.

⁴⁴ On this "striking" characteristic of 2 Peter, see KRAUS, *Sprache*, 162,

God's "virtue", as the display of the glory of his "nature", is already seen in the granting of his promises (1,4a: δι' ὧν [referring back to δόξη καὶ ἀρετῇ] ... δεδότηται) and will be seen fully at the eschatological consummation (cf. 2 Pet 1,11.16-17; 2,8-9; 3,11-13.18).

The fact that the promises are an expression of God's own glory as seen in his virtue (δι' ὧν) finds its counterpart in the description of these promises as τίμια καὶ μέγιστα, the third hendiadys in 1,3-4. The promises are "precious" (τίμια) in that they are "very great" (μέγιστα)⁴⁵. Their origin in God's glory and the display of that same glory in their eschatological fulfillment determine their value as "precious". In the thought of 2 Peter, the greatness of their content, which is nothing less than the coming cosmic judgment and new creation, reflects just how valuable these promises are. God's promises express his glorious nature as Savior (1,1) and Lord (1,2), who, as an expression of his virtue, will judge the world, vindicate his righteousness and rescue his people in the age to come (cf. 2,9-10; 3,7-13). A transformation of the primitive Christian eschatology, which "centers round the question of whether God is indeed God and when he will fully assert himself as such", into a "purely man-centered" doctrine focused on divine retribution and apotheosis, in which "the Judge of the world has become the instrument of the apotheosis of the pious man", is therefore foreign to the thought of 2 Peter⁴⁶. 2 Peter does not abandon, but establishes "the peculiar theme of the primitive Christian eschatology", in which, as Käsemann himself put it, "the *Kyrios* comes to take possession of his creatures and his world"⁴⁷.

In what sense, then, are God's promises given to believers in order that they might become κοινωνοί of the divine nature? In distinction to both the verb, κοινωνέω, and the feminine, abstract noun, κοινωνία, the masculine noun, κοινωνός, refers to those who are partners or fel-

164, who lists the noun doublets in 1,2.3(2x).4.10.16.17; 2,8.11.12.13.17.22; 3,2.5.7(2x).10.11.12.13.14.16.18, and the participle doublets in 1,12; 2,10; 3,3-4.12.

⁴⁵ The superlative functions here as the elative. D.B. WALLACE, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI 1996) 303, points out that the superlative is used about as frequently for the elative as it is for the superlative proper. This is the only superlative form in the NT; for the related noun, μεγιστάν, see Mark 6,21; Rev 6,15; 18,23.

⁴⁶ Contra KÄSEMAN, "Apologia", 181-182.

⁴⁷ "Apologia", 182-183.

low participants with others in a common identity, reality, or activity, though the dative or prepositional reference to others is often not expressed, being either implicit, clear from context, or unimportant for the argument ⁴⁸. In its fullest construction, the noun is used with a genitive to indicate the reality in which one participates ⁴⁹. Thus, the genitive *θείας φύσεως* is not that with which one has partnership, but the reality in which one partners with others ⁵⁰. The common English translation of *κοινωνός* as "sharing in" can consequently be misleading. The appropriate translation is either "partner" (with others in a reality or endeavor), or "fellow participant" ⁵¹.

The rendering "partner in something (with others)" or "fellow participant/partaker of something (with others)" is especially striking in 1,4, where the referent is God's own character. For as Hauck has pointed out, the *κοινωνέω* -family is never used in the LXX of humanity's relationship to God, since the righteous one remains

⁴⁸ So J. Y. CAMPBELL, "Κοινωνία and its Cognates in the New Testament", *JBL* 51 (1932) 353; see also M. McDERMOTT, S. J., "The Biblical Doctrine of KOINONIA", *BZ* 19 (1975) 65 and STARR, *Divine Nature*, 190.

⁴⁹ F. HAUCK, *κοινωνός*, κτλ., *TDNT* 3, 797-809 and J. HAINZ, *KOINONIA: "Kirche" als Gemeinschaft bei Paulus* (BU 16; Regensburg 1982) 102-122, especially 103.

⁵⁰ Contra Wolters (see above). As exceptions, CAMPBELL, "Κοινωνία", 357, 380, found only two possible examples of the genitive of the person with whom one shares something: Plutarch, *Mor.* 145D, with the feminine noun used to refer to sexual relations, and Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 2.69C. Furthermore, if this unusual meaning of partnership *with* the divine character were in view here, one would expect not the genitive, as in 1,4, but *μετὰ θείας φύσεως*. CAMPBELL, 361, 354, consequently renders 1,4, "partakers of the divine nature", and concludes that *κοινωνοί* in 1,4 "means scarcely more than *μέτοχοι*", since often "*κοινωνός*" means little, if anything, more than 'a participant in' (= *μέτοχος*); cf. 361 on 1,4: "If *κοινωνός* here differs at all from *μέτοχος* it is only in that it implies, as *μέτοχος* would not necessarily do, that others also will share in the glory".

⁵¹ For this same meaning, cf. its eight uses in the LXX (see esp. Mal 2,14; cf. 4 Kgdms 17,11; Esth 16,13; Prov 28,24; Sir 6,10; 41,19; 42,3; Isa 1,23) and nine in the NT (Matt 23,20; Luke 5,10; 1 Cor 10,18.20; 2 Cor 1,7; 8,23; Phlm 17; Heb 10,33; 1 Pet 5,1). *Κοινωνός* occurs in the Greek Pseudepigrapha only in *Jan. Jam.* A 2,24 (*κοινωνός νεκρῶν*). Cf. the often cited parallel from Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.232, where we read of an Egyptian whose wisdom and knowledge of the future were said "to have partaken/to have been a partner of the divine nature" (*θείας δὲ δοκοῦντι μετεσχηκέναι φύσεως*).

God's servant (עֶבֶד; cf. δοῦλος) in a relationship of dependence on the Lord, rather than being regarded as God's "associate" (חֵבֶר) ⁵². Clearly, the expression γένεσθαι θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως goes beyond typical OT modes of expression. Nevertheless, within the eschatological worldview represented throughout 2 Peter, the point of 1,4, unlike that of the dominant culture, is not that one may share in or be one with God's essence or being per se, whether that be God's immortality or incorruptibility, either now, at death, or at the Parousia, as Käsemann argued. Nor does 1,4 refer to taking on God's or Christ's moral character, as Calvin suggested, or to becoming, in Wolters' view, God's present-day covenant partner. The point of 2 Pet 1,4 is not ontological. What God promises in 1,4 is that his people may become fellow participants (with one another) in God's character as expressed in his eschatological acts of deliverance on their behalf at the end of history.

To that end, the antecedent, adverbial participle-clause of 1,4c, ἀποφυγόντες τῆς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ φθορᾶς, indicates the reality in the present that will bring about this future participation in the "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet 3,13). The virtue list that follows in vv. 5-7 unpacks what this escape looks like, which is subsequently summarized in the conditions of 1,8.10 and 3,11.14, since throughout 2 Peter eschatology drives ethics, just as the false teachers' denial of the Parousia leads to the licentiousness described in 2 Peter 2,2.10-22. Whereas in 1,3-4 God's glorious nature expresses itself in the keeping of his promises as the display of his virtue (ἀρετή), in 1,5 the transformed life of faith expresses itself in the pursuit of virtue (ἀρετή), which leads to the inheritance of these divine promises.

Read in this way, "becoming a fellow participant of the divine nature" in 1,4b forms an *inclusio* with the promise of being provided an "entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord Savior, Jesus Christ" in v. 11. As its corollary, "escaping the corruption in the world" in 1,4c parallels the threefold conditional reference to the virtue catalog in 1,8-10 (cf. ταῦτα in 1,8.9.10). 2 Peter 1,4 also restates in distinct language

⁵² F. HAUCK, "κοινωνός", 801. Philo, due to his adaptation of an eclectic, middle Platonism, differs in this respect (cf. HAUCK, "κοινωνός", 800, 801, 803). Yet Hauck, 804, renders 1,4 as "a liberation from the natural corruption of earth to participation in the divine nature", as if our text were written by a Greek philosopher.

the earlier point of 1 Pet 5,1 that Peter, as a “fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ”, together with all of God’s people, will be a “fellow participant (κοινωνός) also of the glory about to be revealed” (cf. 1 Pet 4,13).

V. 2 Peter 1,4 in Cultural Context

In view of the links between 2 Pet 1,4 and the eschatological worldview of 2 Peter, θεία φύσις does not seem to be employed simply as an example of 2 Peter’s “grand style”. More to the point and in contrast to the pantheistic cultural impulses of Greco-Roman society, it also calls attention to the fact that the divine nature is not equated with, determined by, or embodied in reason and/or the inherent laws of nature. For example, while Plutarch is often cited as offering conceptual parallels to 2 Peter 1,4, Plutarch’s essentially rationalistic understanding of the deity, strong dualism, belief in reincarnation, and agenda of self-generated moral reform provide a striking contrast to the eschatological thinking of 2 Peter. Plutarch’s hope is that a few, morally elite souls, after a gradual, protracted period of progressive self-mastery, will share in the rational nature of the deity itself⁵³. In 2 Peter, the “divine nature” expresses itself personally, in accord with God’s own promises, which will one day be consummated at the coming of Christ. The λόγος that determines all things in 2 Peter is not nature-infused-with-reason (e.g., Plutarch, *Mor.* 386E; 420B), but the revealed “prophetic word” (ὁ προφητικὸς λόγος) concerning Christ’s return to judge the world (1,19). As a result, the hope of participating in God’s eschatological rescue of his people conveyed in 2 Peter is of a completely different order than the Stoic notion of sharing in the divine nature and the afterlife, in which “a good person lives on after death, either through being re-absorbed into God’s mind or through joining the company of divinized heroes admitted into the Greek pantheon”⁵⁴.

It is also instructive to compare 2 Pet 1,4 to Philo’s recasting of the biblical understanding of the God of Israel in the Hellenistic cat-

⁵³ For a discussion of the relevant texts, see STARR, *Divine Nature*, 122, 125, 128-129, 134-138, 141, who also points out that the exact phrase θεία φύσις does not appear in Plutarch’s writings.

⁵⁴ STARR, *Divine Nature*, 158.

egories of the day ⁵⁵. On those few occasions when Philo does use the exact phrase *θεία φύσις*, it too refers to the character of God expressed either in God's own actions or in the actions of those who act like God in some way ⁵⁶. However, whereas Philo speaks of the nature of the supreme God in terms of the divine Logos/reason of Hellenistic philosophy, our passage interprets the divine nature in terms of the eschatological promises of God as the expression of the divine power that determines history. Whereas for Philo the soul's present vision of God is the pathway to participating in the divine nature, in 2 Peter it is God's own intervention in history, at the end of this age, through which his people become fellow participants in the consequences of his character as judge and redeemer.

Finally, the rhetorical strategy of 2 Peter is also quite distant from both the overt Hellenistic framework of 4 Maccabees and the tradition of the Hellenistic Jewish apologists of the era. The goal of 2 Peter is not to recast biblical traditions in the thought forms of his day for the sake of apologetics to non-believers. Rather, 2 Peter adapts appropriate conceptuality from the culture in order to communicate to believers a biblically-informed message concerning the reality and implications of the second coming of the Messiah ⁵⁷. This contrast with the Jewish apologists of the day distinguishes 2 Peter

⁵⁵ See, e.g., the categories of middle Platonism in *Conf.* 171-173; *Fug.* 97; *Det.* 83; *Opif.* 21, 23, 84; etc. So Runia, *Philo*, 518: though Philo is not a Platonist per se, "the profound influence of Plato's writings and their interpretative tradition must be recognized for what it is, a pillar of Philo's thought which, if removed, would cause the whole edifice to totter and collapse".

⁵⁶ For the only uses of the singular, *θεία φύσις*, see *Abr.* 144; *Spec.* 1.116, 269 (*θειοτέρα φύσις*); 2.224-225 and the indirect reference in *Spec.* 1.266. For examples of the more common plural form to refer to both incorporeal (*ἀσώματοι*) and corporeal (*αἱ οὐκ ἄνευ σωμάτων*) beings, cf. *Opif.* 144; *Her.* 176; *Fug.* 162, 163; *Abr.* 107, 115 (angels as "those holy and divine beings" [*ἱεραὶ καὶ θείαι φύσεις*], whom "the primal God" [*ὁ πρῶτος θεός*] employs as his ambassadors); *Decal.* 104; *Prov.* 2.50; *Gig.* 7-8, where stars are "divine souls" (*ψυχὰι θείαι*), i.e., mind in its purest form (*νοῦς ἀκραιφνέστατος*), a view also held by the Stoics, Plato, and Aristotle (LCL II, 502).

⁵⁷ Though beyond the scope of this essay, this same rhetorical move may be seen in the appropriation of the language of "Stoic conflagration physics" in the unpacking of the eschatological promises from 2 Pet 1,4 and 3,13 in 2 Pet 3,10-17; for a more nuanced analysis of this Stoic background, esp. the flexible nature of the Stoic motif of *ἐκπύρωσις*, which would allow for such an adaption to biblical content, see J.A. HARRILL, "Stoic Physics, the Univer-

from the perspectives of the later church apologists as well, who, beginning in the second century, appropriated Philo’s approach positively ⁵⁸, and from those subsequent trajectories of *theosis* that wrongly take 2 Pet 1,4 as a proof text ⁵⁹. 2 Peter 1,4 neither signals a dualistic departure from early Christian eschatology nor does it provide support for the later Christian doctrine of *theosis*. To return to Käsemann, the theology of 2 Peter, like that of the rest of the NT, remains a daughter of its apocalyptic mother ⁶⁰.

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SUMMARY

This article offers a new reading of what it means in 2 Pet 1,4 to participate in the “divine nature”. The divine φύσις (“nature”) in 2 Pet 1,4 refers not to an abstract, divine “essence” or “being”, but to God’s dynamic “character expressed in action” in accordance with his promises. Being a fellow participant (κοινωνός) of this “nature” thus refers to taking part in the eschatological realization of the “new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (cf. τὰ ἐπαγγέλματα in 2 Pet 1,4 with ἐπάγγελμα in 2 Pet 3,13).

sal Conflagration, and the Eschatological Destruction of the ‘Ignorant and Unstable’ in 2 Peter”, *Stoicism in Early Christianity* (eds. T. RASIMUS – T. ENGBERG – PEDERSEN – I. DUNDERBERG) (Grand Rapids, MI 2010) 115-140. Harrill, however, does not argue for the integration of the Stoic motifs within a biblical framework, asserting rather the opposite, that “the author of 2 Peter tries to reformulate early Christian beliefs about the parousia into the rational framework of a scientific eschatology” (131).

⁵⁸ Cf. RUNIA, *Philo*, 549-551, pointing, e.g., to Justin and Clement of Alexandria and to Philo’s influence on Arianism and Docetism as well, and J. KLINGER, “The Second Epistle of Peter: An Essay in Understanding”, *SVTQ* 17 (1973) 163, 163 nn.20-21, pointing to Clement, *Strom.* 6.17; Origen, *Princ.* 3.3.2; *Cels.* 1.10, and to the extensive work of Daniélou on this topic.

⁵⁹ For the diversity of the *theosis*-tradition and its sources, see Christiansen – Wittung, *Partakers*, who nevertheless begin their work with a quotation of 2 Pet 1,4 (see p. 11).

⁶⁰ E. KÄSEMANN, “The Beginnings of Christian Theology”, *New Testament Questions of Today* (Philadelphia, PA 1969) 102; and, in the same volume, “On the Subject of Primitive Christian Apocalyptic”, 137.

ANIMADVERSIONES

A Circumstantial Clause in Psalm 99,4

In Psalm 99 the interpretation of v. 4 is a persistent problem. Some try to solve it by textual emendation ¹. In my view, the Masoretic Text does make sense.

1. *Explanations of MT offered so far*

The main problem in the Masoretic Text is the relation between the first stich (v. 4a) and its context. A related problem is the function of the introductory ג.

Some connect v. 4a with v. 3, taking עז מלך as an object of יודו. With this interpretation הוא קדוש may be regarded as an interjection, and משפט מלך as a relative clause defining מלך:

Mögen sie preisen deinen Namen gross und furchtbar;
er ist heilig!
Und die Macht des Königs, der das Recht liebt ²!

Or v. 4a is assumed to state a reason:

Qu'ils louent 'son' nom, grand et redoutable, *Il est saint*.
Car la puissance du Roi aime le droit ³.

Or the words הוא קדוש are considered part of a quotation:

Deinen Namen sollen sie bekennen:
"Groß und furchtbar, heilig ist er!"
und die Macht des Königs,
der das Recht liebt ⁴.

¹ See J.J. EATON, "Proposals in Psalms XCIX and CXIX" *VT* 18 (1968) 555-557; R. SCORALICK, *Trishagion und Gottesherrschaft*. Psalm 99 als Neuinterpretation von Tora und Propheten (SBS 138; Stuttgart 1989) 61-63.

² F. BAETHGEN, *Die Psalmen*. Übersetzt und erklärt (HK II/2; Göttingen 1904) 300. Thus also the Targum and e.g. J. SCHILLER, "Bemerkungen zur Analyse und Interpretation von Psalm 99", *BN* 91 (1998) 80.

³ E. PODECHARD, *Le Psautier*. Traduction littérale, explication historique et notes critiques (Lyon 1949-1954) II, 164, reading שמו instead of שמך (v. 3).

⁴ M. BUBER, *Die Schriftwerke*. Verdeutscht (Heidelberg 1976) 146.

In its different forms this interpretation, while trying to do justice to the introductory ו, runs counter to the structure of the poem. Psalm 99 is logically divided into two stanzas. The first stanza honours YHWH as the universal king (vv. 1-3), who brings about justice and righteousness in Israel (v. 4). The second stanza mentions YHWH's goodness and severity toward those of his servants who were granted close communication with him (vv. 6-8). In vv. 5 and 9 the stanzas are concluded by a varying refrain. The call קְרוֹשׁ הוּא (v. 3b) announces this refrain, thereby concluding the first of two strophes. So v. 4a must be the opening of a unit.

Some authors, taking מִשְׁפָּט אֱהֵב as a relative clause to מֶלֶךְ, consider עֵז מֶלֶךְ to be the object of כוֹנֵנֶת in the second stich. The noun מִישְׁרִים may now be understood as an adjunct (cf. Ps 58,2; 75,3; Cant 1,4):

Und eines Königs Gewalt, der das Recht liebt,
Hast Du festgestellt in Geradsinnigkeit; [...] ⁵.

Or מִישְׁרִים is taken as an object of עֲשִׂית:

Thou doest establish the strength of a king, who loveth judgement,
Thou executest equity, judgement and righteousness in Jacob ⁶.

This type of interpretation can hardly be right. It is doubtful whether עֵז ('strength') may be an object of כוֹן pol. ('establish'). In the proposed reading, moreover, the mention of 'a king' is problematic. If the מֶלֶךְ were the Judean ruler ⁷, the first line of v. 4 would be, in this song for YHWH as a king, a somewhat isolated element. If the reference were to YHWH ⁸, the phrasing "the strength of a king..." would be curious by its indirectness.

It has been suggested that v. 4a is in apposition to the statement of the following clause:

Und die Stärke eines Königs, der das Recht liebt:
befestigt hast du gerechte Ordnung [...] ⁹.

From a syntactic point of view, this reading seems rather strained. In addition, עֵז characterizing an action would be unusual.

⁵ F. DELITZSCH, *Biblischer Commentar über die Psalmen* (Leipzig 41883) 662; also J. RIDDERBOS, *De Psalmen*. Vertaald en verklaard (COT; Kampen 1955-1958) II, 454.

⁶ B.D. EERDMANS, *The Hebrew Book of Psalms* (OTS IV; Leiden 1947) 452.

⁷ DELITZSCH, *Psalmen*, 663: "Es ist das theokratische Königtum gemeint".

⁸ Thus RIDDERBOS, *Psalmen* II, 456.

⁹ F. HITZIG, *Die Psalmen*. Uebersetzt und ausgelegt (Leipzig 1863-1865) II, 265.

Finally, v. 4a is taken as an independent clause. It may be read then as a nominal clause with **משפט אהב** as its subject:

Und die Stärke eines Königs ist, daß er Rechtsnorm liebt: [...] ¹⁰.

Or **משפט** alone is considered to be the subject, with **אהב** as a relative clause:

Und / Aber eines Königs Macht ist (das) Recht, das er liebt: [...] ¹¹.

In principle, these readings are possible. However, in the former reading the supposed type of clause would be “very rare” ¹², while in the latter the supposed relative clause, though not impossible ¹³, would be very terse. The remaining option is to take v. 4a as a verbal clause:

Und die Stärke des Königs liebt das Recht [...] ¹⁴.

This reading is already found in the Septuagint ¹⁵ and is certainly meaningful. A concept (quality), personified, can indeed be the subject of actions and states (for **אהב** cf. Prov 8,17), even when it is linked to a person (see Isa 58,8b; Ps 40,13aß; 43,3). As for the notion “love”, it may stand for “choose”, “aim at”, or “put effort into” (cf. **אהב** in Am 5,15; Ps 109,17).

So v. 4a appears to be about a king worthy of the name, a king whose “strength” is exercised in establishing justice. Questions, however, remain. Why in v. 4 does the first stich open with י? Why has the second stich no element clarifying the relation between v. 4a and the rest of the verse?

¹⁰ E. KÖNIG, *Die Psalmen*. Eingeleitet, übersetzt und erklärt (Gütersloh 1927) 227. See also, e.g., A. MAILLOT – A. LELIÈVRE, *Les Psaumes*. Traduction nouvelle et commentaire (Genève 1961-1969) II, 287; SCORALICK, *Trishagion*, 68.

¹¹ F.L. HOSSFELD – E. ZENGER, *Psalmen 51-100*. Übersetzt und ausgelegt (HTKAT; Freiburg i.B. 2000) 691.

¹² P. JOÜON – T. MURAOKA, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome 1991) § 157a sub I.

¹³ See W. GESENIUS – E. KAUTZSCH, *Hebräische Grammatik* (Leipzig 1909) § 155h; JOÜON – MURAOKA, *Grammar*, § 158c.

¹⁴ H. HUPFELD, *Die Psalmen*. Übersetzt und ausgelegt. Für die 3. Aufl. bearbeitet von W. NOWACK (Gotha 1888) II, 408. *Revised English Bible*: “The King in his might loves justice”.

¹⁵ There τιμὴ βασιλείας, “a king’s honour”.

2. Syntactical approach

Clauses opening preferably ¹⁶ with the subject and frequently introduced by ¹⁷ may present a fact as subordinate to the main course of a narrative or to the main point of a statement ¹⁸. In this case they are called “circumstantial”.

Circumstantial clauses can sometimes be taken as independent statements. Introductory ¹ may be rendered then by “now” or “for”. Gen 16,1: לו לא ילדה לו [...] ושרי “Now Sarai [...] bore him no children”. Gen 14,12: והאיש ירבעם גבור “For he lived in Sodom”. 1 Kgs 11,28: חיל “Now that man Jerobeam was very able”.

By its content a circumstantial clause is often clearly related to the preceding clause. It is generally rendered then by a subordinate clause, the nature of which is to be deduced from the context. Gen 18,1: והוא ישב פתח-האהל “as he sat at the entrance of his tent”. Ps 28,3: ורעה בלבבם “though mischief is in their hearts”. In a clause added in this way, introductory ¹ is sometimes left out. Deut 5,5: [...] עמד “while I was standing between YHWH and you”. 2 Sam 18,14: עורני חי בלב האלה “while he was still alive in the terebinth”.

A short circumstantial clause may be inserted in a sentence. 2 Sam 13,20: וחשב תמר ושוממה בית אבשלום “And Tamar, being desolate, remained in Absalom’s house”. Ps 68,10b: נחלתך ונלאה אתה כוננתה “your heritage, when it was weary, you restored it” (insertion after *casus pendens*).

Finally, circumstantial clauses may be put before the clause to which they relate. 1 Kgs 14,17: [...] והנער מת [...] היא באה [...] “As she came [...], the child died”. 2 Kgs 2,11: [...] והנה רכב-אש [...] ויהי המה הלכים [...] “And it happened as they went on, walking and talking, that a chariot of fire was seen [...]”¹⁹. If a prefixed circumstantial clause has introductory ¹, that element is coloured semantically by the function of the clause in its context ²⁰. Clauses following a question may demonstrate this. In Gen 50,19

¹⁶ However, cf. S.R. DRIVER, *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew and Some Other Syntactical Questions* (Oxford ³1892) 198-199; A.B. DAVIDSON, *Hebrew Syntax* (Edinburgh ³1901) §139.

¹⁷ F.I. ANDERSEN, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew* (The Hague 1974) 77-78, considers introductory ¹ essential.

¹⁸ Depending on the context, however, clauses of this type may also express emphasis (e.g. Gen 33,3; Ps 13,6), contrast (Gen 4,2; 6,8), or anteriority (Gen 31,19.34). In some texts they could reflect official style (see e.g. Gen 4,18; 10,24). Cf. DRIVER, *Tenses*, 200-202.

¹⁹ See also e.g. Gen 44,3.4; Judg 15,14a; 18,3a.

²⁰ DRIVER, *Tenses*, 210-211, mentions texts in which the circumstantial clause introduced by ¹ precedes the “main” clause (Judg 3,24; 20,39-40; 1 Sam 17,23; 2 Sam 2,24; 2 Kgs 2,23). However, even Driver, in his elaborate discussion of the circumstantial clause, does not treat this type separately; he probably took ¹ simply as a copula.

Joseph says, “Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God?” He goes on to say: **ואתם חשבתם עלי רעה אלהים חשבה לטבה** “Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good” (v. 20). Josh 22,24-25: **ונבול נתן-יהוה [...] אינ-לכם חלק ביהוה** – **As YHWH has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you [...], you have no portion in YHWH**. Ezek 18,19: **“Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?” Answer: חיה יחיה [...] חיה משפט וצדקה עשה [...]** “Because the son has done what is lawful and right [...], he shall surely live”. That introductory **ו** is not simply a conjunction can also be seen in Job 1,13-14: **ויהי היום ובניו [...] ובנותיו אכלים [...] ומלאך בא בא** “It happened one day, when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine [...], that a messenger came”. Ezek 2,4: **[...] שולח [...] אני שולח [...] והבנים קשי פנים [...]** “As the sons are impudent and stubborn, I am sending you to them”. Apparently the “sons”, as sons of Israel and the “fathers”, had already been blamed for rebellion in v. 3; therefore, and on account of the repeated “I am sending you”, the first clause in v. 4a may be considered to be logically subordinate to the second ²¹. Similarly Hab 1,10: **הוא לכל-מבצר ישחק [...] הוא במלכים יחקלס [...] ואני עני ואביון ארני יחשב לי** “As he scoffs at kings and makes sport of rulers, he laughs at every fortress”. Ps 40,18: **ואני עני ואביון ארני יחשב לי** “As I am poor and needy, may the Lord take thought for me”.

Statements in which **ו** plus pronoun, a form of **אמר** and a quotation are followed by a clause opening with **אך** or **אכן** are a special category. Isa 14,13-15: **ואתה אמרת [...] אך אל-שאול תורר:** “You said indeed in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven [...]’. But you are brought down to Sheol”. Isa 49,4: **[...] ואני אמרתי [...] אך משפטי [...]** “I said indeed, ‘I have laboured in vain [...]’. Yet surely my cause is with YHWH” ²². Ps 31,23: **ואני [...] אמרתי [...] אך שמעת [...]** “I said indeed in my alarm, ‘I am driven far from your sight’. Yet you heard my supplications”. In this construction the circumstantial clause seems to have relative independence.

In some texts, as may have been noted, the main clause ²³ is introduced by *waw apodosis* (1 Kgs 14,17; 2 Kgs 2,11; Job 1,14). This is often the case when a clause is preceded by a circumstantial clause expressing time

²¹ There could be a similar case in Gen 41,56 (cf. v. 55a). Texts like 1 Kgs 13,20 and 2 Kgs 8,21b suggest that a circumstantial clause can be logically subordinate to a clause with consec. imperfect following it. It is hard to decide whether this also applies to clauses with introductory **ו** and finite verb.

²² The situation in Isa 14,13-15; Ps 31,23; 82,6-7 conveys the impression that, contrary to what translations suggest, the quotation only includes v. 4a.

²³ “Main” in a logical rather than a grammatical sense.

or condition ²⁴. Gen 38,25: [...] **והיא מוצאת והיא שלחה** "As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law". Josh 2,8: **והמה טרם ישכבון והיא עלתה** "Before they went to sleep, she came up to them on the roof". Judg 3,24: **והוא יצא ועבדיו באו** "After he (Ehud) had gone, his (Eglon's) servants came". 1 Sam 9,11: [...] **והמה מוצאו** [...] **המה עליהם** "As they went up the ascent to the town, they met some girls". 2 Sam 2,24: **והשמש באה והמה באו עדינבעת אמה** "When the sun had gone down, they came to the hill of Ammah". Isa 6,13: [...] **ועוד בה עשריה ושבה** "If still a tenth part is in it, it will be burned again". Isa 53,4b.5a: **ואנחנו חשבנו נגוע** [...] **והוא מחלל מפשענו** "When we accounted him stricken, struck down by God and afflicted, he was wounded for our transgressions".

In the texts mentioned the following features are noteworthy as well. If a prefixed circumstantial clause has no noun indicating the subject, a finite verbal form in it is preceded by the relevant pronoun (Gen 50,20; Josh 2,8; Judg 3,24; Isa 53,4b; Hab 1,10; see also Isa 14,13; 49,4; Ps 31,23). In a main clause, after a circumstantial clause, a subject as indicated by a noun (Gen 50,20; Judg 3,24; 1 Kgs 14,17; Ps 40,18; Job 1,14) or a pronoun (Gen 38,25; Josh 2,8; 1 Sam 9,11; 2 Sam 2,24; Isa 53,5a; Ezek 2,4; Hab 1,10; Ps 68,10b) is put before the verbal form to which it relates ²⁵. If a prefixed circumstantial clause is concessive (Gen 50,20) or causal (Josh 22,25; Ezek 2,4; 18,19; Hab 1,10; Ps 40,18), the construction of the sentence is asyndetic.

In the first line of Ps 99,4 the introductory **ו**, the asyndesis, the position of both subjects, and the use of the pronoun indicate a syntax of the type here discussed: see esp. Gen 50,20; Ezek 2,4a; Hab 1,10; Ps 40,18. So Ps 99,4a can be understood as a circumstantial clause expressing causality ²⁶ relative to the statement in the second stich. Verse 4 as a whole makes a logical transition between the preceding verses and those following. I understand the content of the verse in the following way: It is essential to kingship that its power be used in the service of righteousness (cf. Judg 17,6; Prov 8,15; 14,35; 16,10.13; 20,8; 22,11, also Ps 101); accordingly YHWH, king of the earth, has established justice and righteousness in Israel, his heritage. As a translation of the verse I propose the following:

²⁴ Asyndesis, however, is found in poetical texts: see Ps 17,3; Job 8,12; 29,24.

²⁵ If in the circumstantial clause and the main clause the subject is the same, it is not always indicated in the main clause: see Isa 6,13; Ezek 18,19b; also Job 8,12.

²⁶ E. PODECHARD, too, takes v. 4a as an expression of causality. See above, section 1.

As the strength of the king loves justice,
you have established equity;
in Jacob you have brought about
justice and righteousness.

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SUMMARY

In Psalm 99,4 the first stich is a circumstantial clause expressing causality relative to the clause following it. Verse 4 means to say that YHWH's royal power is exercised in establishing justice, as is shown by his acts in Israel. A syntax identical with that of the first line in Ps 99,4 can be found in Gen 50,20; Ezek 2,4a; Hab 1,10; Ps 40,18a.

Dans les lignes qui suivent, je me pencherai sur quatre versets bibliques qui attestent l'emploi de la forme *qāṭal* après עֲדָ־אֵנָה / עֲדָ־מָתִי ("jusqu'à quand?")¹, à savoir Ps 80,5; Ex 10,3; 16,28 et Ha 1,2. Le problème en jeu ici provient du fait qu'en contexte non passé, avec עֲדָ־אֵנָה / עֲדָ־מָתִי, c'est le *terminus ad quem* (jusqu'à) d'un procès toujours en cours qui est en question (quand?) et que donc on attendrait, non pas un *qāṭal* accompli, mais plutôt un *yiqṭol* inaccompli, comme forme verbale finie. Les grammairiens ont perçu le problème et ont proposé diverses solutions, mais celles-ci ne me paraissent pas satisfaisantes. J'aborderai donc le problème différemment, en me concentrant davantage sur le type de procès (verbe d'action vs verbe d'état) déclenché par le verbe employé dans chacun de ces versets. Cette approche permet de mieux comprendre la raison de l'emploi du *qāṭal*, et non du *yiqṭol*, après עֲדָ־אֵנָה / עֲדָ־מָתִי, dans ces versets, mais également pourquoi, contrairement aux apparences, le dernier verset abordé doit être traité (et traduit) différemment des trois premiers. Mais l'intérêt de cette étude dépasse le cadre de ces quatre versets. En effet, elle rappelle, au niveau textuel, qu'il faut parfois prendre une distance par rapport à la vocalisation massorétique, et, au niveau linguistique, que, si la distinction entre accompli et inaccompli est importante, celle entre verbe d'action et verbe d'état l'est tout autant pour comprendre le fonctionnement du système verbal de l'hébreu ancien².

Je commencerai par le Ps 80,5, pour lequel je développerai l'argumentation. Celle-ci servira pour Ex 10,3 et 16,28, qui seront traités ensemble, parce qu'ils sont quasiment identiques et surtout présentent une même difficulté supplémentaire. Je terminerai avec Ha 1,2 avant de conclure.

¹ Aucune différence de sens n'est perceptible entre עֲדָ־אֵנָה et עֲדָ־מָתִי, comme l'attestent la comparaison d'Ex 10,3 et 16,28 (voir plus loin).

² Les quatre versets abordés ici apparaissent, il est vrai, dans des genres littéraires différents, mais ce fait ne me semble pas devoir être pris en compte, puisqu'il ne change absolument rien au problème.

I. Ps 80,5

יהוה אלהים צבאות עד־מתי עשנת בחפלה עמך
 “Éternel, Dieu de l’univers, jusqu’à quand t’irriteras-tu contre
 la prière de ton peuple?”³

Comment expliquer l’emploi du *qāṭal* après עד־מתי dans ce verset — comme dans les trois suivants — et comment comprendre la nuance qu’apporte ce *qāṭal*? Les grammairiens ont tenté de résoudre la difficulté et il convient de commencer par examiner leurs propositions. Cet examen permettra de cerner davantage la problématique, mais également d’éviter les impasses et ainsi de dégager les principes nécessaires en vue d’une explication satisfaisante.

Dans la partie concernant le *qāṭal* avec les verbes d’action, P. Joüon et T. Muraoka donnent l’explication suivante à propos d’Ex 10,3: “In some cases, e.g. in a question, the action is assumed to continue up to a certain moment in the future: עד־מתי מאנת ‘until when have you refused’ (and will you continue to refuse?), so ‘will you refuse?’”⁴. Appliqué à Ps 80,5, le *qāṭal* exprimerait une action posée dans le passé qui se prolongerait dans le futur: jusqu’à quand t’es-tu irrité (et continueras-tu de t’irriter?), d’où: jusqu’à quand t’irriteras-tu? Mais cette explication, surtout le passage du passé au futur et plus encore en fait le passage de l’accompli (“have refused”) à l’inaccompli (“continue to refuse”), donne une vision assez étrange de l’emploi des formes verbales en hébreu ancien et en définitive n’explique pas vraiment la raison de l’emploi du *qāṭal*. Dans le Ps 74,10, עד־מתי יחרף צר ינאץ אויב שמך לנצח, “Jusqu’à quand, ô Dieu, l’adversaire va-t-il proférer [ou profèrera-t-il] ses insultes, et l’ennemi mépriser [ou méprisera-t-il] sans cesse ton nom?”, on constate que les deux actions qui se prolongent dans le futur, mais qui ont leur origine logiquement dans le passé — d’où la question “jusqu’à quand?” —, sont naturellement exprimées au *yiqtol*.

B.K. Waltke et M. O’Connor expliquent, quant à eux, les cas comme Ex 10,3 de la manière suivante “We have already noted that in other languages which are aspectually oriented the perfective aspect may be associated with *future situations*. The same holds for Hebrew. Temporal indicators mark the

³ Chaque verset cité dans cet article sera accompagné d’une traduction tirée de la *Bible Segond 21*, édition de 2007. Cette traduction, qui ne constitue évidemment pas en elle-même un quelconque argument d’autorité, puisqu’il m’arrivera de la contester, n’a d’autre but que de faciliter dans un premier temps la lecture du texte hébreu et de signaler, pour les quatre versets en question, le sens généralement admis.

⁴ P. JOÜON – T. MURAOKA, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Studia Biblica; Roma 2006) §112e.

future time in which the temporal situation occurs [...]. The suffix conjugation marks the situation as complete: the prefix conjugation does not do so, but rather marks the situation as dependent. Representing a future action or situation as complete⁵ and independent leads to a certain dramatic quality of representation”⁶. Selon cette approche, le *qāṭal* du Ps 80,5, comme en Ex 10,3, présenterait l’action de manière globale dans la sphère du futur indiquée par עֲדָמָתִי. Que le *qāṭal* puisse présenter l’action de manière globale ne pose guère de problème, par contre que ce *qāṭal* d’aspect perfectif puisse être employé en contexte futur me semble être un emploi tout à fait étranger aux langues sémitiques. À ce propos, il est assez significatif de constater, d’une part, que pour prouver la réalité de cet emploi du *qāṭal*, ces deux auteurs recourent au comparatisme comme seul point d’appui, et, d’autre part, que la langue de comparaison soit une langue non sémitique, mais indo-européenne, à savoir le bulgare⁷. On n’est finalement guère plus avancé avec cette explication qu’avec celle des deux auteurs précédents, car on ne voit toujours pas la différence entre les *qāṭal* du Ps 80,5 et d’Ex 10,3 et les deux *yiqṭol* du Ps 74,10 mentionnés plus haut ni la raison de l’emploi de ces *qāṭal* ; dans tous ces cas, vu le contexte non passé, c’est bien la durée d’un procès toujours en cours qui est en question (“jusqu’à quand?”)⁸.

Le point commun entre ces deux grammaires est précisément, selon moi, ce qui les empêche de résoudre la difficulté, à savoir qu’elles considèrent que le *qāṭal* après עֲדָמָתִי / עֲדָאָנָה est un accompli, et donc aussi, quoique d’une manière un peu implicite, que le verbe employé est un verbe d’action. Or, en contexte non passé, la forme verbale qui apparaît après עֲדָמָתִי / עֲדָאָנָה et surtout qui est introduite ainsi vise un procès toujours en cours et ne peut de ce fait en aucun cas être une forme d’aspect accompli⁹. Dans ce contexte, avec un verbe d’action, seul le *yiqṭol* inac-

⁵ Valeur que ces auteurs attribuent au perfective: “an aspect (*Aspekt*) in which a situation is understood as complete (rather than completed), as a whole”, B.K. WALTKE – M. O’CONNOR, *A Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN 1990) 692 (Glossary, *sub* perfective).

⁶ Id., §30.4 c-d.

⁷ Id., §30.4 b. Rien n’empêche bien entendu de comparer un emploi verbal de l’hébreu ancien avec une autre langue, même non sémitique, mais cette comparaison me semble pertinente uniquement s’il s’agit de mieux expliquer ou d’illustrer un emploi réellement avéré en hébreu ancien, qui peut être compris sans cette comparaison, non pour prouver la réalité d’un emploi verbal, qui ne pourrait pas l’être sans la comparaison ; ce qui aurait plutôt l’effet inverse.

⁸ Ce que P. Joüon et T. Muraoka ont bien perçu en parlant d’une action posée dans le passé qui *continue* jusqu’à un certain moment du futur.

⁹ En contexte passé, une forme verbale d’aspect accompli, comme le *qāṭal* (avec un verbe d’action), serait tout à fait compatible avec עֲדָמָתִי / עֲדָאָנָה. Exemple en français, vu que cette construction n’apparaît pas en contexte passé en hébreu ancien: “Jusqu’à quand refusa-t-il / a-t-il refusé de venir ?”.

compli¹⁰ ou le participe¹¹ sont admissibles, mais si c'est le *qāṭal* qui apparaît et qu'il est effectivement introduit par עֲדָמָה / עֲדָאָה¹², le verbe employé ne peut être qu'un verbe d'état (ou statif) et c'est alors la continuité ou persistance de l'état décrit par le verbe qui est en question.

Ces principes étant établis, reste à voir si le verbe employé dans le Ps 80,5, ainsi que dans chacun des trois autres versets, peut être considéré comme un verbe d'état (ou statif) et ensuite comment comprendre le sens de chacun de ces versets pour le rendre le mieux possible en français.

En plus du Ps 80,5, le verbe עָשָׂן apparaît cinq autres fois dans la Bible hébraïque. Il est employé comme verbe d'action, dans le sens concret de "fumer" dans les Ps 104,32 et 144,5 et dans le sens figuré de "fumer", "s'enflammer", "s'allumer" (avec אֵף pour sujet) en Dt 29,19 et dans le Ps 74,1. Par contre en Ex 19,18, וְהָרַם סִינַי עָשָׂן כָּל־מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר יָרַד עָלָיו יְהוָה בְּאֵשׁ, "Le mont Sinaï était tout en fumée parce que l'Eternel y était descendu au milieu du feu", toutes les versions ont compris que la séquence עָשָׂן כָּל־וְהָרַם décrivait un état durable, une situation¹³, ce qui est tout à fait correct vu le verset 16¹⁴. Mais comme dans le texte hébreu le verbe עָשָׂן est employé au *qāṭal*, et non au *yiqṭol*, et qu'il décrit une situation, un état durable, il ne peut qu'avoir été pris dans le sens statif — et concret — de "être en fumée" et non actif de "fumer"¹⁵.

Pour revenir au Ps 80,5, je suggère que le verbe עָשָׂן y a le même sens statif qu'en Ex 19,18, mais, cette fois, pris de manière figurée, donc "être enflammé, être irrité". On aurait pu penser que, dans les mêmes conditions,

¹⁰ Avec עֲדָמָה Ex 10,7; 1 S 1,14; 2 S 2,26; Né 2,6; Ps 74,10; 82,2; 94,3; Pr 1,22; 6,9; Jr 4,14,21; 12,4; 31,22; 47,5; Os 8,5 et Za 1,12. Avec עֲדָאָה Nb 14,11 (2x); Jb 8,2; 18,2; 19,2; Ps 13,2 (2x).3 (2x); 62,4 et Jr 47,6.

¹¹ Avec עֲדָמָה 1 S 16,1 et 1 R 18,21. Avec עֲדָאָה Jos 18,3.

¹² On verra l'importance du fait que la forme verbale soit réellement introduite ou dépendante de עֲדָמָה / עֲדָאָה quand j'aborderai Ha 1,2.

¹³ La Septante a l'indicatif imparfait (ἐκαπνίζετο), de même la Vulgate (fumabat) et les versions françaises; les versions anglaises ont le *past continuous tense*.

¹⁴ Ce verset nous indique que "le matin du troisième jour, il y eut des coups de tonnerre, des éclairs et une épaisse nuée sur la montagne" et ceci, avant que (v. 17) Moïse ne fasse sortir le peuple du camp pour aller à la rencontre de Dieu et que le peuple ne se place au bas de la montagne. Le verset 18 décrit donc bien l'état de la montagne depuis le matin. Dès lors, bien que c'eût été grammaticalement possible, le contexte empêche de rendre Ex 19,18a ainsi "Le mont Sinaï fuma (se mit à fumer) parce que l'Eternel y était descendu au milieu du feu".

¹⁵ Cf. JOÜON – MURAOKA, *Biblical Hebrew*, §112 b; le sens actif ou dynamique – choix de certaines traductions – aurait exigé le *yiqṭol* (action passée durative), cf. Id., §113 a et e.

un verbe statif aurait dû apparaître au *yiqtol*, mais apparemment ce n'est pas aussi certain. On constate, il est vrai, que “generally speaking stative verbs tend to become active; thus several verbs which have a stative qatal have an active yiqtol”¹⁶. Ainsi, même dans les contextes passé et présent, on trouve des verbes statifs traités comme des actifs, comme dans les deux exemples suivants¹⁷:

Ps 32,4, יִדָּךְ חִכְבֵּר עָלַי יָדְךָ, “car nuit et jour ta main pesait lourdement sur moi”

Pr 3,12, כִּי אֶת אֲשֶׁר יֶאֱהָב יִהְיֶה יוֹכִיחַ וְכֹאֵב אֶת־בֶּן יִרְצֶה, “car l’Eternel reprend celui qu’il aime, comme un père l’enfant qui a sa faveur (ou qu’il chérit)”

Dans les exemples suivants, les verbes statifs employés après עֲדָמְתִי sont aussi traités comme des actifs, d’où l’emploi du *yiqtol*¹⁸; on peut d’ailleurs aisément sentir leur caractère dynamique:

Ex 10,7, עֲדָמְתִי יִהְיֶה זֶה לָנוּ לְמוֹקֵשׁ, “Jusqu’à quand cet homme sera-t-il pour nous un piège?”, soit par ex.: “jusqu’à quand celui-ci nous piégera-t-il?”

Né 2,6, עֲדָמְתִי יִהְיֶה מִהֶלֶךְ, “Combien ton voyage durera-t-il [...]?” (litt. Jusqu’à quand sera ton voyage?), soit par ex.: “jusqu’à quand voyageras-tu?”

Pr 1,22, עֲדָמְתִי פִתִּים תֵּאֱהָבוּ פֶתִי, “Jusqu’à quand, vous qui manquez d’expérience, aimerez-vous la naïveté?”, soit par ex. “Jusqu’à quand, vous qui manquez d’expérience, agirez-vous avec naïveté?”.

Dès lors, au regard des explications menées jusqu’ici, dans le Ps 80,5, l’emploi du *qāṭal* (עֲשָׂנָה) après עֲדָמְתִי me semble avoir pour effet de maintenir le sens statif du verbe עָשָׂן en contexte non passé et, de la sorte, c’est la persistance d’un état intérieur (mental) qui est en question (“jusqu’à quand?”). Si cette analyse est correcte, on aurait un exemple de l’emploi d’un verbe statif en contexte *non passé* qui ne devient pas actif, mais reste statif. Je propose de traduire ce verset ainsi

יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים צְבֹאוֹת עֲדָמְתִי עֲשָׂנָה בְּתַפְלַת עַמְּךָ, “Éternel, Dieu de l’univers, jusqu’à quand demeureras-tu (dans l’état d’être) enflammé contre la prière de ton peuple?”.

¹⁶ JOÜON – MURAOKA, *Biblical Hebrew*, §113 a. Voir aussi Id., §41 b.

¹⁷ Repris de Id., §113 a.

¹⁸ Cf. A. VAN DE SANDE, *Nouvelle perspective sur le système verbal de l’hébreu ancien Les formes *qatala, *yaqtul et *yaqtulu* (PIOL 57; Louvain-la-Neuve 2008) 362-363.

Par contre, lorsque le caractère dynamique est inhérent au sémantisme du verbe (cas des verbes d'action), pour signifier le fait d'*être/demeurer dans l'état de faire l'action* exprimée par le verbe, c'est plutôt le participe qui est employé

1 S 16,1, עַד־מָתִי אַתָּה מִתְאַבֵּל אֶל־שָׂאֻל, “Quand cesseras-tu de pleurer (litt. jusques à quand toi menant deuil) sur Saül?”, soit “jusqu’à quand demeureras-tu dans l’état de mener deuil sur Saül?”
 1 R 18,21, עַד־מָתִי אַתֶּם פֹּסְחִים עַל־שְׁתֵּי הַסַּעֲפִים, “Jusqu’à quand clocherez-vous (litt. vous clochant) des deux côtés?”, soit “jusqu’à quand demeurerez-vous dans l’état de clocher des deux côtés?”
 Jos 18,3, עַד־אָנָּה אַתֶּם מִתְרַפִּים לְבֹא לְרֶשֶׁת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ, “Jusques à quand négligerez-vous (litt. vous négligeant) de prendre possession du pays...?”, soit “jusqu’à quand demeurerez-vous dans l’état de négliger de prendre possession du pays...?”

Passons maintenant aux deux versets suivants, qui, pour des raisons évoquées plus haut, sont traités ensemble.

II. Ex 10,3

עַד־מָתִי מֵאַנְתָּ לִעֲנֹת מִפְּנֵי

“Jusqu’à quand refuseras-tu de t’humilier devant moi?”

Ex 16,28

עַד־אָנָּה מֵאַנְתֶּם לִשְׁמֹר מִצְוֹתַי וְתוֹרוֹתַי

“Jusqu’à quand refuserez-vous de respecter mes commandements et mes lois?”

Comme on l’a vu, les explications proposées par les grammairiens pour Ex 10,3 ne sont pas très convaincantes. Mais si l’idée que l’emploi du *qāṭal* après עַד־מָתִי / עַד־אָנָּה a pour effet de maintenir le sens statif du verbe en contexte non passé peut expliquer le cas du Ps 80,5, ces deux versets-ci présentent la difficulté supplémentaire que le verbe n’apparaît pas au Qal dans le texte massorétique, mais au Piel. Or, c’est un fait bien connu que le Piel a entre autres pour effet de donner un sens factitif aux verbes statifs¹⁹, qui dès lors deviennent actifs.

Toutefois, cette difficulté peut peut-être est levée, car, malgré la vocalisation massorétique, il semble que le verbe מֵאַן n’était à l’origine pas employé au Piel mais au Qal et ce pour trois raisons.

¹⁹ Cf. JOÜON – MURAOKA, *Biblical Hebrew*, §52 d.

Tout d'abord, parmi les nuances de sens du Piel, signalés dans les grammaires (factitive; declarative-estimative; pluralizing; denominative)²⁰, on ne voit pas très bien dans quelle catégorie entrerait le verbe מָאֵן. Par contre, avec son sens de "refuser" ou mieux encore de "ne pas vouloir"²¹, ce verbe se laisse aisément ranger dans la catégorie des verbes statifs, au Qal, pour décrire l'état intérieur du sujet.

Ensuite, on explique mieux la forme participiale de מָאֵן telle qu'elle apparaît dans Ex 7,27, וְאִם־מָאֵן אֹתָהּ לִשְׁלַח, "Si tu refuses de le laisser partir" (9,2; 10,4 et Jr 38,21) et Jr 13,10, הָעָם הַזֶּה הָרַע הַמְּאֵנִים לִשְׁמוֹעַ אֶת־דְּבָרִי, "Ce méchant peuple, qui refuse d'écouter mes paroles"²². Ainsi on ne doit plus postuler l'haplographie des deux mem מָאֵן < מְמָאֵן²³ puisque pour les verbes מָהַר²⁴ et מָלֵא par exemple, on a respectivement les participes Piel suivants מְמַהֵר (Gn 41,32), מְמַלְאֵה (Pr 6,18) et מְמַלְאֵם (1 Ch 12,16), המְמַלְאֵם (Jb 3,15).

²⁰ Cf. JOÜON – MURAOKA, *Biblical Hebrew*, §52 d. Cf. aussi B.K. WALTKE – M. O'CONNOR, *Hebrew Syntax*, 396-417.

²¹ La LXX a largement choisi ce sens pour traduire מָאֵן θέλω "vouloir" + négation (Gn 37,35; 39,8; 48,19; Nb 20,21; 22,14; Dt 25,7; 2 S 13,9; Ps 77,10 [TM 78,10]; Is 1,20; Jr 5,3 (2x); 8,5; 9,5; 11,10; Os 11,5); βούλομαι "vouloir" + négation (Ex 4,23; 10,3; 16,28; 22,16; 1 S 8,19; 28,23; 2 S 2,23; Pr 21,7); négation seule (Ex 7,14; Nb 22,13); ἀπειθέω "désobéir" (2 R 5,16; Za 7,11); εἰσακούω "obéir" + négation (Est 1,12); ἀπανάλινωμαι "refuser" (Ps 76,3 [TM 77,3]); ὑπακούω "obéir" + négation (Pr 1,24); προαιρέω "choisir, préférer" + négation (Pr 21,25).

²² Cf. S.E. FASSBERG, "The Movement from *Qal* to *Pi'el* in Hebrew and the Disappearance of the *Qal* Internal Passive", *Hebrew Studies* 42 (2001) 252 qui mentionne Z. BEN-HAYYIM, *A Grammar of Samaritan Hebrew Based on the Recitation of the Law in Comparison with Tiberian and Other Jewish Traditions* (Jerusalem 2000) §0.5, qui opte aussi pour le Qal au lieu du Piel avec haplographie.

²³ Cf. H. BAUER – P. LEANDER, *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache* (Hildesheim 1965) §22 d et 24 n et JOÜON – MURAOKA, *Biblical Hebrew*, §52 c.

²⁴ Dans les références de la note précédente, la forme מָהַר de So 1,14, קָרוֹב, יוֹם־יְהוָה הַגָּדוֹל קָרוֹב וּמָהַר מֵאֵד (Tout) près, le grand jour de l'Eternel. (Tout) près et très en hâte" [ma traduction] est considérée comme une haplographie pour *מְמַהֵר. Mais il est tout à fait possible de voir dans cette forme un infinitif absolu employé de manière adverbiale ("מָהַר vite, en hâte"), comme en Jos 2,5 (רַדְּפוּ מָהַר, "Dépêchez-vous de les poursuivre (litt. poursuivez-les en hâte)") et sans doute aussi dans le nom חַשׁ מָהַר שֶׁלֵּל d'Is 8,1.3, cf. JOÜON – MURAOKA, *Biblical Hebrew*, §102 e et 123 r. A noter aussi que l'adjectif מָהַר dans So 1,14 est considéré par Joüon comme un adverbe de suppléance (d'où ma traduction), cf. Id., §102 c.

Enfin, si **נאן** était à l'origine un verbe statif employé uniquement au Qal, la vocalisation massorétique suggère le passage du Qal au Piel au cours de l'évolution de la langue. Or ce changement est attesté et a été démontré pour une série de verbes²⁵. Vu le sens du verbe **נאן**, plutôt statif, et l'absence systématique de la préformante *mem* au participe, il est envisageable que ce passage du Qal au Piel se soit produit avec ce verbe.

En hébreu postbiblique, le verbe **נאן**, qui n'apparaît qu'au Piel, est devenu un terme technique pour exprimer soit la contestation par une femme de son mariage contracté durant sa minorité, soit l'annulation du mariage, et signifie "protester contre", "annuler son mariage", "recommander une protestation"²⁶. On remarque qu'avec ces significations, **נאן** est un verbe d'action puisque le procès s'accomplit hors du sujet. On pourrait donc imaginer qu'à un certain stade de la langue, le verbe **נאן** était employé au Qal avec un sens statif et au Piel avec un sens actif, mais qu'à un stade ultérieur, le premier emploi est tombé en désuétude et que le second emploi, seul subsistant, a été réservé au domaine matrimonial. Comme les Massorètes ne connaissaient ce verbe qu'au Piel, ils l'ont vocalisé ainsi dans le texte biblique, et ce même quand, au participe, la préformante *mem* n'apparaissait pas.

Si l'on admet que **נאן**, qui a toujours le sens de "refuser, ne pas vouloir" dans le texte biblique, était en réalité un verbe statif employé uniquement au Qal, on aurait avec Ex 10,3 et 16,28, deux autres exemples de l'emploi d'un verbe statif en contexte non passé qui ne devient pas actif, mais reste statif. Ceci ne modifie pas les traductions données pour ces deux versets, mais cela signifie que dans ceux-ci, c'est la durée de l'entêtement ou du mauvais état d'esprit (le refus persistant) qui est à chaque fois en question ("jusqu'à quand?").

Avant de conclure, il reste à aborder notre dernier verset.

III. Ha 1,2

עַד־אֵנָּה יְהוָה שׁוֹנֵעַתִּי וְלֹא תִשְׁמָע

"Jusqu'à quand, Éternel, vais-je crier à toi? Tu n'écoutes pas"

Contrairement au verbe employé dans les deux versets précédents, le verbe **שׁוֹע** est un véritable Piel et a donc un sens actif et non statif. Ceci exclut l'idée que le *qāṭal* exprime ici un état d'esprit du sujet dont la durée

²⁵ Cf. FASSBERG, "The Movement from Qal to Pi"el", 223-252.

²⁶ Cf. M. JASTROW, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (London – New York, 1903) 723.

est en question. Pourtant, malgré l'emploi du *qāṭal*, la plupart des versions ont choisi de traduire שוֹעֲתִי par un temps non passé.

Pour respecter l'emploi de ce *qāṭal* de sens actif et le traduire par un temps du passé – ou surtout rendre son aspect accompli –, il n'est guère d'autre solution que de détacher la question יהוה עֲדָאָנָה du verbe שוֹעֲתִי. Autrement dit, on est amené à considérer que ce n'est pas la durée de l'action de crier qui est en question ici ²⁷, mais que c'est עֲדָאָנָה qui constitue la question-même qui a été crie à יהוה par le prophète, mais que יהוה ne semble toujours pas entendre.

Cette solution est tout à fait envisageable, puisque dans les trois versets suivants, עֲדָמָתִי apparaît clairement comme étant la question elle-même et n'est donc lié à aucun verbe:

Is 6,11, ואמר עֲדָמָתִי אֲדֹנִי ויאמר עד אשר אֲשִׁיאוּ עֵרִים
 “Je dis: Jusqu’à quand, Seigneur? Et il répondit Jusqu’à ce que les villes soient dévastées”

Ps 6,4, ונפשי נבהלה מאד ואת יהוה עֲדָמָתִי
 “Mon âme est très troublée. Et toi, Eternel, jusqu’à quand?” ²⁸

Ps 90,13, שובה יהוה עֲדָמָתִי והנחם על־עבדיך
 “Reviens, Eternel ! Jusqu’à quand? Aie pitié de tes serviteurs!”

La traduction donnée par la Bible Segond dans l'édition de 1910 ²⁹ me paraît donc avoir le mieux rendu le sens du texte hébreu: עֲדָאָנָה יהוה שוֹעֲתִי
 “Jusqu’à quand, ô Eternel? ... J’ai crié, et tu n’écoutes pas !”.

Dans cette étude, j’ai tenté de cerner la raison de l’emploi du *qāṭal* après עֲדָמָתִי / עֲדָאָנָה en Ps 80,5; Ex 10,3; 16,28 et Ha 1,2. Le fond du problème, qui, en fin de compte, semble avoir quelque peu échappé aux grammairiens, était de voir comment concilier la question “jusqu’à quand?”, qui, en contexte non passé, porte sur la durée d’un procès toujours en cours, et l’emploi, non du *yiqṭol* ni du participe, mais bien du *qāṭal*. J’ai affirmé dès lors que, si le verbe au *qāṭal* était réellement introduit par עֲדָמָתִי / עֲדָאָנָה, il ne pouvait s’agir que d’un verbe d’état (ou statif) et que c’est donc la durée ou persistance de l’état (mental) décrit par le verbe qui est en question. J’ai montré ensuite que le verbe employé en Ps 80,5 devait être pris dans un sens statif (et figuré), sens qu’il a d’ailleurs en Ex 19,18. Il en est de même pour le verbe employé en Ex 10,3 et 16,28, qui, contrairement à la vocalisation massorétique, n’était originellement sans

²⁷ Ce qui serait possible si le verbe était au *yiqṭol*: “Jusqu’à quand, Seigneur, crierai-je ?”.

²⁸ Ma traduction.

²⁹ De même dans la Nouvelle Edition de Genève de 1975 et 1979.

doute pas un Piel, mais très probablement un Qal. Par contre, le verbe employé en Ha 1,2 ne peut être qu'un verbe d'action. Dans ce cas, le *qāṭal* est bien un accompli et ne peut donc pas être introduit par עֲדָ־אָנָה; c'est plutôt la question elle-même qui est l'objet du verbe.

Si ces analyses sont correctes, les trois premiers versets offrent alors des exemples de verbes d'état (ou statifs) qui, en contexte non passé, ne sont pas traités comme des actifs. En outre, ces cas rappellent que la classe du verbe (actif *vs* statif) est tout aussi importante pour comprendre le choix de la forme verbale (*qāṭal vs yiqtol*) que l'aspect grammatical (accompli *vs* inaccompli) et que cela n'est pas sans conséquence pour la compréhension d'un passage et donc pour sa traduction. Enfin, avec Ex 10,3 et 16,28, on voit qu'il est parfois nécessaire de prendre en compte la réalité de la distance qu'il y a entre le texte consonantique et sa vocalisation massorétique.

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SUMMARY

This paper examines the construction עֲדָ־מָתִי / עֲדָ־אָנָה followed by a *qāṭal*-form in Ps 80,5; Exod 10,3; 16,28, and Hab 1,2. Taking into account the verbal process-type (active *vs* stative), I show that we find a better explanation than those proposed by the grammars.

Chosen through Sanctification (1 Pet 1,2 and 2 Thess 2,13) The Theology or Diction of Silvanus?

The literary relationship between the First Epistle of Peter and the Thessalonian letters has long been noted and has had varying degrees of significance attributed to it ¹. The thesis that these texts share a common relationship to Silvanus/Silas as an amanuensis was made popular in English language scholarship by Selwyn's commentary on 1 Peter in the 1950s ². Whilst most recent commentators do not find sufficient evidence to support the notion of Silvanus as the basis for a literary relationship between these texts ³, there is some limited theological and verbal similarity which still calls for an explanation. Perhaps the most striking example of this theological similarity is the unusual association of "election" and "the sanctification of the Spirit" in 1 Pet 1,1-2 and 2 Thess 2,13.

Both texts feature the identical phrase ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος and employ this as a dative of agency expressing the means of "election", or rather, the process by which the addressees came to have the status of chosen people ⁴. This distinction is necessary since 1 Pet 1,1-2 relates this "sanctification" to the title ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις, whilst 2 Thess 2,13

¹ Following W. BORNEMANN, "Der erste Petrusbrief – eine Taufrede des Silvanus", *ZNW* 19 (1920) 143-165.

² E.G. SELWYN, *The First Epistle of St Peter. The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Essays* (London 1958) 9-17 and 372-373. Cf. L. GOPPELT, *Der erste Petrusbrief* (MeyerK 12:1; Göttingen 1978) 347-348.; J.N.D. KELLY, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (BNTC; London 1969) 215.

³ Principally because 1 Pet 5,12 could also refer to Silvanus as the bearer of the Epistle in a manner similar to Ign. *Phil.* 11,2. J. R. MICHAELS, *1 Peter* (WBC 49; Nashville, TN 1988) lxii and 306-307; P.J. ACHTEMEIER, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia, PA 1996) 349-351; N. BROX, *Der erste Petrusbrief* (EKKNT 21; Zurich 1986) 240-243; R. FELDMEIER, *The First Letter of Peter. A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX 2008) 38 and E.R. RICHARDS, "Silvanus was not Peter's Secretary: Theological Bias in Interpreting διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ... ἔγραψα in 1 Peter 5:12", *JETS* 43:2 (2000) 417-432. Cf. J.G. GOURBILLON, "La Première Epître de Pierre", *Evangile* 50 (1963) 17, and T. SELAND, *Strangers in the Light. Philonic Perspectives on Christian Identity in 1 Peter* (BIS 76; Leiden 2005) 24-25.

⁴ K.H. JOBES, *1 Peter* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI 2005) 69 with the majority of commentators takes this in 1 Pet 1,2 to be an instrumental dative. J.B. GREEN, *1 Peter* (THNTC; Grand Rapids, MI 2007) 19 takes ἐν ἁγιασμῷ as a locative dative.

relates “sanctification” to εἴλατο as an adverbial clause. In each case, “sanctification” is not seen as the exclusive means of “election”. In 2 Thess 2,13, it is accompanied by another dative of agency, πίστει ἀληθείας, and in 1 Pet 1,2 election is described as effected κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρὸς.

A number of scholars have noted the literary and conceptual similarity of the two texts. Scholars such as F.J.A. Hort and G. Milligan, writing before Bornemann’s “Der erste Petrusbrief — eine Taufrede des Silvanus”, suggest some degree of literary dependence, noting a common lack of the definite article with πνεύματος⁵. Achtemeier notes the similarity between these two verses, suggesting that Rom 15,16 also contains the same concept, though it makes no reference to election⁶. Likewise, Elliott notes the unusual combination of terms in 2 Thess 2,13 and 1 Pet 1,2 and suggests the influence of a primitive baptismal tradition evident in Rom 6,1-11.19.22 and Matt 28,19, though none of these relate “sanctification” to election⁷. A further similarity may be the “trinitarian” structure of each theological assertion in which ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος is used. This structure has often been noted with regard to 1 Pet 1,1-2. Yet if one regards 2 Thess 2,14 as a continuation of the thought of 2,13 (which it quite clearly is), then εἰς περιποίησιν δόξης τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ might be regarded as offering a similar ‘trinitarian’ structure⁸. Whilst the similarity, even the dependence, of 1 Pet 1,2 and 2 Thess 2,13 is obvious to many scholars, few have noted the significance of the phrase as a description of how divine election takes place. Nowhere else in the New Testament is “sanctification” taken to be an instrumental means by which God chooses his people.

This theological similarity is interesting since those who have supported the notion of Silvanus as an amanuensis have typically done so to explain the language rather than the theology of 1 Peter⁹. Could it be that Silvanus

⁵ F.J.A. HORT, *The First Epistle of St. Peter I.1-II.17*. The Greek Text with Introductory Lecture, Commentary and Additional Notes (London 1898) 21.1 and G. MILLIGAN, *St Paul’s Epistles to the Thessalonians*. The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes (London 1908) 107.

⁶ ACHTEMEIER, *1 Peter*, 86.

⁷ ELLIOTT, *1 Peter*, 318-319.

⁸ For example, A.M. MBUVI, *Temple, Exile and Identity in 1 Peter* (LNTS 345; London 2007) 73-74 argues that 1 Pet 1,1-2 offers a “trinitarian” account of how the communities addressed by 1 Peter become the “Temple-Community”. Cf. F.H. AGNEW, “1 Peter 1:2 — An Alternative Translation”, *CBQ* 45 (1983) 70.

⁹ C.E.B. CRANFIELD, *The First Epistle of Peter* (London 1950) 14; C. BIGG, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude* (ICC; Edinburgh 1902) 6, and KELLY, *Peter*, 33. Cf. SELWYN, *St Peter*, 372-373. on Silvanus’ possible Greek ability.

played a slightly bigger part in the composition of 1 Peter? Obviously, the dominant theological themes of 1 Peter and 2 Thessalonians are quite distinct from each other. Though both have a concern for eschatology, in 2 Thessalonians this interest is detailed whereas in 1 Peter it is assumed as a sub-plot to a more dominant concern for Christian life in the present¹⁰. Furthermore, 1 Peter has a concern for the theological status of his audiences as bearers of several scriptural titles for Israel, as well as a concern for communal order, seen in the *Haustafel* material in chapter three, that is completely lacking in 2 Thessalonians. Yet the phrase ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος is identical. This ought to be considered to be of some significance since these are the only places in the New Testament where it is used. Moreover, the theological concept it relates to is very distinctive; indeed, it appears to be unique to these two places in the New Testament¹¹. The only comparable notions of agency in election appear to lack explicit reference to the work of the Spirit or sanctification (Rom 8,28-29; 16,13?; Eph 1,4-5.11). At the same time, it must be noted that whilst the work of the Spirit is important in both 1 Peter and 1 and 2 Thessalonians (though 2,13 is the only reference to the Spirit in the latter), nowhere is the Spirit's role in election discussed in any detail, or indeed mentioned outside of the particular phraseology employed in 1 Pet 1,2 and 2 Thess 2,13. Indeed, the Spirit is mentioned nowhere else in 1 Peter in relation to sanctification, though one might expect to discern an obvious relation between an epistolary prescript and the content of the epistle. Whilst the holiness of Christian life is prominent in the paraenesis of the epistle (1,13-16; 2,5.9; 3,5), there is no indication that holiness is a product of the Spirit's work. Rather, the role of the Spirit is seen in revelation (1,11? and 1,12), the resurrection of Christ (3,18) and comfort during persecution (4,14). The notion, then, of election through the sanctifying work of the Spirit suggested by ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος seems barely related to the broader doctrine of 1 Peter. Could this then represent a particular contribution made by Silvanus or some other common amanuensis of both 1 Peter and 2 Thessalonians?

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¹⁰ B. SARGENT, "The Narrative Substructure of 1 Peter", *ExpTim* 124.9 (2013) 1-6.

¹¹ Indeed, because of this uniqueness, several commentators have offered theological simplifications of the verse. This can be seen in Calvin's explanation of the phrase in 2 Thessalonians as indicating that the Spirit is a mark of election as in Rom 8,14. See also W. MCCOWN, "'God's Will ... for You': Sanctification in the Thessalonian Epistles", *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 12 (1977) 30.

SUMMARY

This short study re-examines the theory, dominant for much of the 20th Century, that Silvanus acted as an amanuensis in the composition of 1 Peter. The phrase ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος appears only in 1 Pet 1,2 and 2 Thess 2,13 in the New Testament, both of which have a stated association with Silvanus. In addition to this, the phrase is theologically incongruous, bearing no clear relation to the broader theology of either epistle.

RECENSIONES

Vetus Testamentum

- I. FISCHER – M. NAVARRO PUERTO (eds.); J. ØKLAND (editor of English Edition), *Torah* (The Bible and Woman: An Encyclopedia of Exegesis and Cultural History – Hebrew Bible/Old Testament). Atlanta, GA, Society of Biblical Literature, 2011. VIII - 490 p. 15 × 23.

Les lectures féministes de la Bible se multiplient depuis un certain temps, au moins depuis les ouvrages devenus classiques de Ph. Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Overtures to Biblical Theology 2; Philadelphia, PA 1983) et *Texts of Terror. Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Overtures to biblical theology 13; Philadelphia, PA 1984). Sur les bases et les méthodes de telles interprétations, le lecteur consultera avec profit l'ouvrage collectif de L.M. Russell (ed.), *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (Oxford 1985), traduit par ailleurs en italien: *Interpretazione femminista della Bibbia* (Orizzonti biblici; Assisi 1991). Dans le domaine du Nouveau Testament, c'est le nom de E. Schüssler Fiorenza qui vient immédiatement à l'esprit, depuis *In Memory of Her. A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York 1983) et *Bread Not Stone. The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston, MA 1984). Mais il est sans doute inutile d'allonger la liste, désormais bien connue. Il suffira de mentionner le titre, très proche de celui qui est l'objet de cette recension: T.C. Eskenazi (ed.), *The Torah. A Women's Commentary* (New York 2008) ou la série *The Feminist Companion to the Bible* éditée par A. Brenner.

Le volume que nous présentons brièvement fait partie d'un projet ambitieux. Il s'agit d'une série qui sera publiée simultanément en allemand, en anglais, en espagnol et en italien. Les collaborateurs sont supposés provenir d'un maximum de nations, de cultures et de confessions différentes. De ce point de vue, comme le reconnaît l'éditeur de ce premier volume, cet idéal n'est pas facile à réaliser (vii). Tous les auteurs du présent ouvrage sont européens, mis à part M. García Bachmann (Argentine) et C. Meyers (États-Unis). Un seul article est écrit par un homme (Th. Hieke). Les autres volumes chercheront à corriger ce défaut.

La première édition de ce volume date de 2009 et a été publiée par Kohlhammer (Stuttgart). La version italienne a été publiée par Il Pozzo di Giacobbe (Trapani 2009), et la version espagnole par Verbo Divino (Estella, Navarra 2010). Si d'autres langues sont absentes — par exemple le français ou les langues slaves — c'est pour toute une série de raisons,

entre autres la difficulté de trouver suffisamment de collaborateurs. Pour le dire simplement, les exégètes qui ont lancé le projet sont surtout d'origine européenne, et même continentale, puisqu'on n'y trouve aucune anglaise ou irlandaise.

L'idée de départ est bien connue: les femmes ont longtemps connu la discrimination, et ce n'est pas seulement le fait du judaïsme et du christianisme. Citons pour simple mémoire le fameux texte de Christine de Pisan dans sa *Cité des Dames* (1405): "Hélas! Dieux, pourquoy ne me faiz tu naistre au monde en masculin sexe, a celle fin que mes inclinacions fussent toutes a te mieulx servir et que je ne errasse en riens et fusse de si grant perfeccion comme homme masle ce dit estre?". L'ouvrage entend donc écrire ou réécrire une histoire de la réception des textes bibliques du point de vue féminin — *her-story* et non *his-story* (5) — selon un jeu de mot possible uniquement en anglais. L'histoire a été dominée et écrite en grande partie par les hommes. Dans un monde qui se veut égalitaire, il est donc essentiel de pouvoir donner voix au chapitre à cette moitié de l'humanité qui est restée le plus souvent silencieuse.

Le projet ne se veut pas exhaustif, ce qui serait impossible. Nous ne trouverons donc pas une histoire complète sur la réception des livres bibliques au cours des âges, ni un ouvrage sur les figures féminines dans la Bible dans une perspective féministe, ou un ouvrage sur les femmes exégètes. Il ne s'agira pas non plus d'un commentaire biblique féministe accompagné d'une histoire de la réception, ou encore moins une histoire de la réception des figures féminines de la Bible.

Il s'agira plutôt d'une histoire de la réception qui mettra en relief le rôle actif des femmes dans la transmission des textes bibliques, et cela non seulement dans le domaine strictement religieux, mais aussi dans les divers domaines de la culture (iconographie, art, littérature, musique, etc.): "A feminist reception history of biblical texts of particular relevance to women has yet to be written, likewise a history of women's biblical readings" (29). Pour les origines, l'archéologie jouera un rôle important. Cette histoire de la réception dans une perspective féminine se limitera surtout au monde méditerranéen pour le premier millénaire et s'ouvrira au cinq continents pour le second millénaire.

L'ouvrage veut être scientifique et tenir compte de la recherche dans le monde académique, mais il veut aussi être accessible à un large public. Il comprendra en tout vingt-deux volumes répartis en neuf séries: (1) la Bible hébraïque; (2) le Nouveau Testament; (3) les écrits apocryphes et pseudépigraphiques; (4) l'exégèse juive; (5) les Pères de l'Église; (6) le Moyen Âge et le début de l'époque moderne; (7) l'époque de la Réforme et des révolutions; (8) le dix-neuvième siècle; (9) l'époque contemporaine.

À part le volume sur la Tora, paru dans les quatre langues, un volume sur les évangiles a été publié en espagnol (*Los evangelios*. Narraciones e historia, 2011) et en italien (*I Vangeli*. Narrazione e storia, 2012), édité

par M. Navarro Puerto et M. Perroni. De même, K.E. Børresen et A. Valerio ont édité un volume sur le moyen-âge en italien: *Donna e Bibbia nel Medioevo (secoli XII-XV). Tra ricezione e interpretazione* [Trapani 2011]). Le volume sur les sapientiaux devrait paraître prochainement, édité par N. Calduch-Benages et Ch.M. Maier, tout comme celui sur les prophètes, édité par I. Fischer et A. Brenner.

Les lecteurs attentifs auront remarqué que les écrits deutérocanoniques (apocryphes) seront traités à part puisque la première série de volume est consacrée au canon hébraïque des Écritures. Mais j'ai appris de source autorisée qu'il y aura quelques exceptions. L'histoire de Suzanne (Dn 13 – LXX), l'éloge de la Sagesse dans la Sagesse de Salomon (Sg 7–8) et le livre de Ben Sira seront traités dans le volume sur les sapientiaux. L'article sur Ben Sira s'intitulera "Good and Bad Wives in the Book of Ben Sira: A Harmless Classification?" (N. Calduch-Benages).

Tout cela repose la question du canon qui est le fruit d'une série de décisions prises par des hommes et porte donc la marque d'une société patriarcale. Faut-il rouvrir le canon, surtout celui du Nouveau Testament, comme le suggère F. Schüssler Fiorenza? Poser la question est sans doute déjà y répondre. La même question pourrait être posée, en effet, à propos de la littérature classique et dans bien d'autres domaines. Il vaut mieux, à mon avis, changer ce que l'on peut changer aujourd'hui et demain (voir, à cet effet, l'opinion de D. Scaiola dans ce volume [147, 149]).

Le dialogue avec le judaïsme est un maître mot de l'introduction à ce volume. La Bible hébraïque a connu une double postérité, dans le monde juif et dans le monde chrétien. C'est pourquoi le Nouveau Testament est vu à la fois comme un mode de réception des écritures hébraïques et comme une nouvelle contribution aux Écritures.

Après la préface sur le projet lui-même, le volume compte deux parties et douze articles. La première partie étudie la Bible dans son contexte historique. D'où un article sur l'iconographie du Proche-Orient ancien de S. Schroer, bien connue des spécialistes, un autre de C. Meyers sur la vie des femmes à l'époque biblique illustrée par l'archéologie. Deux autres articles sont consacrés au statut des femmes dans les textes légaux (S. Démare-Lafont) et aux problèmes du canon (D. Scaiola). La deuxième partie parle surtout de questions propres aux femmes dans la Tora: les femmes dans les généalogies (Th. Hieke); l'image et la ressemblance de Dieu (M. Navarro Puerto); les femmes dans les textes sur les ancêtres d'Israël (I. Fischer); les douze femmes qui libèrent Israël en Ex 1–2 (J. Siebert-Hommes); Cippora, la femme évanescence de Moïse (U. Rapp); la figure de Miriam (M. García Bachmann); les catégories de pur et d'impur (D. Erbele-Küster); réflexions sur la situation de la femme dans les textes législatifs (K. Finsterbuch). L'ouvrage se termine par une bibliographie, une liste des contributrices et contributeurs, et un index des anciennes sources. Un index thématique aurait sans doute été utile lui aussi.

Il est évidemment impossible de discuter chacun des articles en détail. Je me contenterai de trois remarques. En premier lieu, il y a dans ce volume de bonnes choses et de meilleures choses. Dire, par exemple, que la Bible est née dans un milieu patriarcal et androcentrique est devenu — ou est presque devenu — un lieu commun de l'exégèse actuelle. De nombreux articles reprennent aussi des études antérieures, mais ils en fournissent d'utiles synthèses. Je pense par exemple à ce que dit S. Schroer sur l'adaptation et l'intégration de traits provenant de divinités féminines à la figure du Dieu biblique, à celui de Th. Hieke sur les généalogies ou à celui de I. Fischer sur les ancêtres d'Israël, etc. Un des articles les plus intéressants, à mon avis, est celui de C. Meyers. Il est pointu, bien documenté, bien illustré et permet de mieux comprendre ce qu'était le travail des femmes à l'époque biblique: la vie quotidienne d'un foyer, les techniques employées pour moudre les céréales, pour tisser les vêtements, les mentions des femmes dans les textes comme les ostraca, le rôle des femmes dans la vie religieuse, etc. De même l'article de D. Scaiola fournit un bon résumé des discussions actuelles sur le canon, en citant B.S. Childs, J.A. Sanders, M. Perani à côté de Ph. Tribble, E. Schüssler Fiorenza et Sh.H. Ringe, pour ne citer que quelques noms. En second lieu, et c'est inévitable, certaines lectures laisseront les lecteurs quelque peu perplexes. Parler des "douze libératrices d'Israël" (295-312) peut paraître excessif surtout si, pour arriver à ce nombre, il faut compter les sept filles de Réouël (Ex 2,16). Parler de la démythologisation d'Ève (236-237) parce que le nom hébreu est proche du nom de celui de Yhwh ne convaincra sans doute pas tout le monde. Faut-il identifier Cippora avec la femme kushite (ou nubienne, selon la *TOB*) de Nb 12,1 (315)? Il aurait été utile, en ce qui concerne le droit d'Israël, de noter ce que G. Zagrebelsky dit à propos d'Antigone et du rôle de la femme dans le monde de la justice: ce sont elles qui, en général, défendent le "droit non écrit" ou la "loi non écrite des dieux" contre les lois édictées le plus souvent par les hommes. Cf. G. Zagrebelsky, *Il diritto mite* (Turin 1992). Le principe est illustré, entre autres, par les sages-femmes d'Exode 1,15-21 et par la fille de Pharaon, la mère et la sœur de Moïse en Ex 2,1-10. En dernier lieu, je me permets de citer une phrase d'une des pionnières du féminisme, Sarah Grimké: "Intellect is not sexed; [...] strength of mind is not sexed; and [...] our views about the duties of men and the duties of women, the sphere of man and the sphere of woman, are mere arbitrary opinions, differing in different ages and countries, and dependent solely on the will and judgment of erring mortals" (Lettre 9, 25 août 1837). Il nous reste à souhaiter à ce projet la réussite qu'il mérite, en imitant ce qu'il a produit de meilleur.

Elisabeth ROBERTSON KENNEDY, *Seeking a Homeland. Sojourn and Ethnic Identity in the Ancestral Narratives of Genesis* (Biblical Interpretation Series 106). Leiden – Boston, Brill, 2011. xiii-266 p. 16,5 × 24,5. €103 - \$146.00

This book is a dissertation from St. Andrews University. Bearing many of the marks of a dissertation, it is a study of the way in which the term *gur*, in its various inflections, can disclose the intentionality of the tradition that is voiced through the narratives of Genesis, their speeches and dialogues. This word usage witnesses to the ways in which the family of Abraham is variously situated inside the land, outside the land, and on its way to the land, cast variously in the roles of “outlaws, fugitives, and immigrants” and ultimately the family of choice. The book begins, in usual dissertation fashion, with a review of the literature, focusing especially on the close study of Reinhard Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde. Die Metapher der Fremde in der antiken Welt, im Urchristentum und im 1. Petrusbrief* (WUNT 64; Tübingen 1992).

As is often the case with a dissertation, this study seeks to advance our understanding by appeal to a fresh theoretical reference point, because such new reference point permits us to turn the text in new directions and see what we have not before seen. Her appeal is to the work Anthony Smith who, in a series of studies, focuses on nationality, territorial sovereignty, and the way in which ideology can serve such territorial claims. His work is concerned with the contemporary reemergence of powerful ethnic claims and is not specifically concerned with the Bible or with ancient texts. Smith’s work seeks to move past “primordialist” (or essentialist) perspectives that situate claims as “universal, natural, and inherent in human nature” and “constructionist” perspectives that are “highly malleable”. Smith’s third way suggests that ethnic groups “are not fixed and immutable entities...but neither are they completely malleable and fluid processes and attitudes, at the mercy of outside forces”. Ethnic groups are both dynamic and enduring, with an open-ended continuity.

Smith’s way of studying nationalist claims includes a study of myths, symbols, historical memories, and “central values”, all of which amount to a “myth-symbol complex”. The matter pivots on “ethnic myth” that then yields a “subjective history”. This presentation of Smith’s perspective seems to me very close to constructivist in a way that wants to deemphasize “scientific history”. And of course in the Hebrew Bible such subjective history culminates in a memory of election with a promise of land that is assigned to that chosen people. Though not cited, Kennedy’s pursuit of subjective history, that is, “constructed ideological memory” seems to be very close to Erich Voegelin’s “paradigmatic history” or to David Weiss Halivni’s “pragmatic history”, neither of which depends on the scientific recovery of data. And since such a mythic complex is an act of sustained, albeit dynamic, imagination, I am surprised that the work of Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Nations. A Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York

2006) was not cited, as he long ago anticipated what seems to be central to Smith's argument.

Kennedy's utilization of Smith's categories traces the itinerancy of the Genesis narratives in and out of the land:

Sojourn in Egypt:

-Ur-to Egypt Itinerary;

-The Sojourn in Egypt;

Sojourn in Gerar;

Sojourn in Paddan-aram:

-Jacob's sojourn ends in Hebron/Canaan;

-Jacob and Esau's land of sojourn.

Her analysis gives a fine overview of the narrative as a series of sojourns.

Along the way Kennedy offers some acute textual analyses. Her attention rightly is not at all on history, but on the generative force of the rhetoric, so that by her detailed analysis she shows the force of the whole.

A chapter is offered on the speeches in the Genesis narrative, a focus on the utterances of God that consist variously in promises of land, commands to sojourn, and offers of blessing. The embedment of these speeches in the narrative is a fresh reading of what has always been before us, but now with most suggestive angle.

Along with these speeches are the dialogues. Extended attention is given to the exchanges in chapters 18–19 that feature Abraham with the three visitors, the interaction between Abraham and Lot, the crisis of Sodom, the challenge of Abraham to God, and God's extended promise to Abraham. These rich chapters are subjected to a close and compelling reading. Kennedy specifically notes the accent on hospitality or the failure of hospitality. The category of hospitality leads to a reflection on those to whom hospitality is owed, thus assisting in drawing ethnic lines of inclusion and exclusion. The next major focus is on the wife-sister theme with Abimelech in chapter 20; here the accent is on *hesed* shown to members of the larger family, thus defining the extent and limits of the family and the zone in which *hesed* is to be enacted. The agreement between Abraham and Abimelech,

offers a unique contribution to the ongoing narrative theme of boundaries and territorial integrity. The wife-sister tales emphasized asymmetry of power, difference of role and characterization between the patriarch and the local king, ethical transgressions by the patriarch, and physical ejection of the patriarch from the king's center of power. The subsequent land negotiations emphasize parity of power, reciprocity of obligation, and ethical fidelity (186).

Thus the narrative makes an argument concerning an alternative mode of social power between insiders and outsiders. From this Kennedy draws the conclusion:

The central claim of this study is that sojourn references in Genesis ultimately contribute to the strength of ethnic identity. Here, sojourn

crystallizes an ethical and relational stance. Abraham, the representative of ethnic Israel, tries out two models of relating in a sojourn context. The exercise is significant enough for repetition, with variations in nuance, three times in the patriarchal narratives. Each time the first model fails. The disempowered sojourner bargaining for power and rights via deception is reprimanded, and he moves away. A second model is successful: the patriarch sojourns, but not too close to the native center of power. His dealings with others exhibit both respective reciprocity and a measure of distance. He is established in the land—still a sojourner, but looking ahead to possession (187).

Kennedy continues her analysis through the Genesis narratives, culminating with the exchange with Pharaoh in the Joseph narrative. In each case, she shows the claims of land are crucial for the construction and the function of the narrative.

The book has the great merit of clarity of articulation and organization. Kennedy is a good reader of texts. She shows how the Isaac narrative of chapter 26 and the entire Jacob narrative are cast in chiasmic form. The outcome of her work is to make clear that the Genesis materials constitute a powerful ideology for the community of Israel. Her concluding paragraph briefly considers the way in which her study echoes in the Hebrew Bible more generally. She hints at the way in which the same urgency is picked up in the New Testament, and eventually may pertain to all of those who are "seeking a homeland". She does not go further than that, but leaves an opening for a contemporary engagement with this text in a world that continues at a rapid rate to produce increasing numbers of displaced persons without a homeland.

The gains of this study include attention called to the work of Smith and focus on particular texts. And surely a reader of the book will continue to have an awareness of the way in which the sojourner theme hovers over all of these texts. That given, however, the gains of the study seem to me relatively small. While the argument is cast in fresh theoretical categories, it is not a new insight that the texts are permeated with a theological claim that has obvious ideological potential. I applaud Kennedy's readiness to settle for subjective history that permits us to bracket out all of the useless quarrels among the minimalists and the maximalists who are, in my judgment, asking the wrong questions. Kennedy is indeed asking the right questions, but they are not new questions and I think she does not, in sum, give new answers. Having said that, it is a welcome study that reminds us of how powerful, how urgent, and how dangerous these texts can be. Her study permits no innocent reading of the text, whether as pious memory that justifies exceptionalism ancient or contemporary, or as positivistic history about which to argue. The text, she makes clear, draws us into hard questions that continue to be urgent among us.

L. Stephen COOK, *On the Question of the "Cessation of Prophecy" in Ancient Judaism* (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 145). Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2011. xi-226 p. 16 × 23. €79

This slightly revised Catholic University of America dissertation (supervised by Christopher T. Begg) examines Second Temple and Rabbinic texts in an effort to determine the status of prophets and prophecy during the Second Temple period. Germane to its concerns are the contentions in Rabbinic Judaism that prophecy ceased with Malachi and those in early Christianity and elsewhere that prophecy continued throughout the Second Temple period. Overall, Cook argues that classical Israelite prophecy did cease in the view of most Second Temple period Jews, but that changes in the understanding of revelatory and pneumatic activity concerning the interaction between the human and divine spheres, both by the ancients and by their modern interpreters, make it possible to claim that prophecy continued, albeit in different forms. Cook is especially careful to distinguish himself from another modern scholar, Stephen L. Cook, who is known for his studies in apocalyptic and prophetic literature and the social identity of ancient Judah.

Cook's study proceeds in three major parts. The first is a presentation of the major texts relevant to the discussion and the scholarly discussion of those texts over the past century and a half. The second is a thorough analysis of the texts in question from the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, Qumran, Rabbinic literature, other Second Temple period Jewish sources, and Patristic sources in which Cook presents his views on each in an effort to identify the ancient streams of thought on the question at hand. The third is a critical assessment of modern scholarship on the subject which is designed to lay out the various schools of thought on the subject among modern scholars.

Part One identifies the relevant texts in the discussion, including those from the Hebrew Bible (Amos 8,11; Mic 3,6-7; Isa 63,11; Ps 74,9; Lam 2,9; Zech 13,2-3); Apocryphal or Deuterocanonical texts (1 Macc 4,45b-46; 9,27; 14,41; Pr Azar 15); the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS 9,9-11; 1QpHab 2,6-10; 7,4-5); Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (2 Apoc Bar 85,1-3); the New Testament (Matt 11,13; Mark 6,15; John 8,52; Acts 19,2; Heb 1,1-2; and many other texts that allude to the belief that Jesus and John the Baptist were prophets and that attest to the existence of prophets and prophecy in the early Church); Patristic literature (Justin Martyr, Dial 53,3-4; Origen, Cels 7,8; Athanasius, Inc 39-40; Augustine, Civ 17,24); Josephus (Ap 1,8, sec. 41); and Rabbinic literature (t. Sot 13,3; y. Sot 9,13,24b; b. Sanh 11a; b. Sot 48b; b. Yoma 9b; Cant Rab 8,9 #3; Seder Olam Rabbah 30; Abot R. Nat A.1; Qoh Rab 12,7; Pesiq Rb Kah 13,14). Cook's discussion of the scholarship on this question notes that nineteenth-century scholars agreed that prophecy had ceased in ancient Israel during the Second Temple period and that prophecy declined in quality following the Babylonian exile, beginning with Ezekiel and ulti-

mately coming to an end in the works of Malachi, Deutero-Zechariah, and Daniel. Twentieth and Twenty-First century scholarship points to a much more complex picture in which the traditional Rabbinic view is seen as an attempt to counter competing claims and thereby to solidify Rabbinic control of prophecy, whereas other movements, such as Qumran and early Christianity, frequently invoke prophetic claims to support their own worldviews. Cook identifies John Barton as a key figure in the discussion who distinguishes between the questions of whether Jews in ancient times believed that prophecy had ceased and whether scholars in modern times believe the same. Cook maintains that it is essential to address the first question before proceeding to the second.

Cook's second major section, the core of his work, takes up the study of textual sources on the question of the cessation of prophecy. He notes that past scholars have often either lumped their sources together indiscriminately or that they have confined their comments only to a few texts leaving their views not fully developed. He therefore takes up a comprehensive study of texts. His analysis of Hebrew Bible texts notes several key points: 1) false prophecy cannot be viewed as prophecy at all; 2) true prophecy exists in degrees so that the anonymous "deutero" prophets indicate that earlier prophets were viewed as superior; 3) prophecy warns Israel of its moral failings and the potential for the withdrawal of the divine presence; and 4) the Hebrew Bible never declares a permanent cessation of prophecy, but it does anticipate periods of prophetic suspension. Analysis of the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical texts points to beliefs in the suspension of prophecy and the anticipation that a great prophet will appear at some point in the future. The Dead Sea scrolls present a belief that the end time has come, that the great prophets of the past were gone, and that new eschatological prophets were about to appear. The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha have little reference to contemporary prophets, but look forward to eschatological prophets. Philo views Moses as the exemplary prophet of the past and claims prophet-like inspiration on his own behalf, but nevertheless believes that instances of contemporary prophecy differ in quality and character from that of the past. The New Testament views past prophets as ideals of the highest caliber, but nevertheless holds out for the return of such ideal prophetic figures, such as John the Baptist and Jesus. Jesus, however, is viewed as superior to the prophets of old. The church fathers view the time of Jesus as the time of the cessation of prophecy in Israel, but their testimony is too theologically tendentious. Josephus differentiates between the prophets of the past and those of his contemporary world. In his view, contemporary prophets foretold the future (e.g., John Hyrcanus) and indicate God's continued care and guidance for the Jewish people. Rabbinic literature holds that either Jeremiah or Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are the last of the prophets, but it also contends that prophecy was taken from the prophets at the time

of the destruction of the Temple and given instead to the wise. The Rabbinic notion of the Bat Qol, "the heavenly voice" (literally, "the daughter of the voice"), provides revelation in the absence of God and is therefore viewed as a fallible echo or substitute for the divine voice of the prophets. Cook contends that the Rabbis held that prophecy had ceased but that the divine voice continued to speak through secondary channels such as the Bat Qol and exceptional individual Rabbis. Altogether, Cook draws two primary conclusions from his textual study: 1) Jews in the Second Temple period saw themselves as living in an interim period in which the revered prophecy of the past had ceased but prophets some day would appear again; and 2) Jews of this period believed that the divine presence continued to be with them despite the absence of prophets. Contrary to past, especially nineteenth-century scholarship, the Second Temple period was not a spiritually dead period; instead it was a period of great religious zeal and fervor.

Cook's third major section is a relatively brief discussion of the major lines of argument concerning the cessation of prophecy in modern scholarship. He points to two general approaches, but astutely notes that the definition of prophecy lies at the core of each. The first is the traditional approach that holds that prophecy ceased in the Second Temple period. But he holds that such a position views prophecy in the classical sense as the original, infallible, unmediated revelation from God and prophets as one who receives such revelation and delivers it to the people of God. In his view, the evidence points to such a view as illegitimate and based on a dogmatic (or more properly, "canonical") view of prophecy. The more recent or non-traditionalist approach holds that prophecy continued through the Second Temple period, but it views prophets and prophecy in broader and more inclusive terms. Such scholars therefore speak of a "transformation" of prophecy rather than of a "cessation" of prophecy in the Second Temple period. Indeed, the argument for the transformation of prophecy in the Second Temple period forms the basis for Cook's own view of the matter. Prophecy was an evolving institution that adapted itself to the needs of Second Temple Judaism.

But such a contention also has its pitfalls. The evidence indicates that prophecy as it was known in the past had indeed ceased to exist, and that the phenomena identified as transformations of prophecy in the Second Temple period and beyond were inherently different even if they owed their origins to the classical understanding of prophecy. Indeed, Rabbinic Judaism viewed prophecy as the basis for its understanding of revelation through the study of divine Torah and thereby defined the ideal model of the Rabbi as the successor to the ideal model of the prophets of old. Likewise, early Christianity understood Jesus as the basis for its own understanding of divine revelation which came to fruition in its view of Jesus as Christ and John the Baptist as his forerunner. Other movements and individuals studied by Cook,

e.g., the Qumran community and Philo, did not survive to see themselves emerge as major movements or derivatives of Second Temple Judaism. In the end, the question turns on a canonical definition of Scripture in post-Second Temple Judaism and Christianity and their self-understandings as much as it turns on any views of the socio-religious evolution of the prophet and prophecy, i.e., both Judaism and Christianity conceived prophecy as transformed in a manner that best supported their own world views. In each case, the “transformed” prophecy was not classical prophecy, but a model that grew out of the classical understanding.

Altogether, Cook has provided a very useful comprehensive study of the issue that can serve as a convenient focal point for future discussion.

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Ibolya BALLA, *Ben Sira on Family, Gender, and Sexuality* (DCLS 8), Berlin – New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011. ix-331 p. 16 × 23,5.

Though the texts that bear Ben Sira’s name are famous for comments that “reflect a negative attitude toward women”, Balla notes that “there are, thus far, no works that provide a systematic analysis of all the sage’s sayings concerning sexual wrongdoings and passions/desires” (10). *Ben Sira on Family, Gender, and Sexuality* is her remedy for the lack of scholarly attention to that important topic, and she states two goals for the book. The first goal is to offer “a systematic detailed study of all the comments that betray something about Ben Sira’s/Sirach’s attitude toward sexuality, in the context of family and gender, including the differences between the Hebrew and Greek text versions”, and the second is “to present a basis for further studies on specific topics and issues in the book of Ben Sira” (10). The author’s Ph.D. thesis, “Attitudes Toward Sexuality in the Book of Ben Sira”, forms “the basis” of the present book (1, n. 1).

The Hebrew original of the deuterocanonical Greek text Sirach dates from about 180 BCE, and the Greek translation from about 132 BCE. Both versions were popular in their time. The Greek version, which is part of the Septuagint, has been better known than the Hebrew, which was lost for over a thousand years. Sections of the Hebrew text have been found, beginning in the 1890’s, and we now have Hebrew MSS that cover about two-thirds of the Greek text. Balla limits her study of Ben Sira’s texts to these two early witnesses, the Hebrew and Greek, with occasional references to the Syriac version (3). All translations from the Hebrew and Greek texts of Ben Sira are her own (7).

The study is organized according to categories of “family”, “teachings on illicit sexual behavior”, and “Wisdom poems”. “Family” comprises the first three chapters: fathers, mothers, and widows in chapter 1; sons and daughters in chapter 2; and marital relationships in chapter 3. “Illicit sexual behavior” is the topic for chapter 4, and “Wisdom poems” for chapter 5. Chapter 6 is “Conclusion”, followed by an appendix of extant Hebrew and Greek versions of the passages (with translations), the bibliography, an index of modern authors, and an index of ancient texts.

Balla does not provide an explicit list of her chosen methodological approaches; so I have compiled several pertinent comments. She states that, in the book, “the word ‘sexuality’ is used in a broad sense to cover all matters pertaining to sexuality, rather than more narrowly as referring to sexual theory or sexual orientation” (2). “Gender,” also, seems to receive a broad scope, rather than explicit discussion of relevant theories. “Text-critical notes” are included in the appendix (7, 231), and social-scientific views are discussed in “Excursus: Honour and shame in the ancient Mediterranean world, in the Bible, and in the Book of Ben Sira” (142-144).

The book is distinguished by the care with which Balla aligns the presentation of her research with previous work by a number of scholars. Among this group several seem to be a particular set whom she cites at numerous points, in comments on her chosen verses. Most frequently cited are P.W. Skehan and A.A. Di Lella (*The Wisdom of Ben Sira* [AB 39; New York 1987]), W.C. Trenchard (*Ben Sira's View of Women. A Literary Analysis* [BJS 38; Chico, CA 1982]), B.G. Wright (*No Small Difference. Sirach's Relationship to Its Hebrew Parent Text* [SCS 26; Atlanta, GA 1989], also three essays and one article), I. Lévi (*The Hebrew Text of the Book of Ecclesiasticus* [SSS 3; Leiden 1904]), and P.C. Beentjes (*The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew. A Text Edition of All Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and a Synopsis of All Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts* [VTSup 8; Leiden 1997], also nine essays and one article). These are the scholars whose opinions provide an ongoing commentary, some with whom she agrees, some in disagreement, some providing alternate translations, or reconstructions. Balla's many brief citations from this group provide an ongoing response to previous work, particularly at the level of the texts themselves. At the level of her interpretations of the text, she cites these scholars as well as many others.

Balla's own contributions appear in context against the densely-woven background of citations. She provides meticulous comparisons for specific verses of the Hebrew and Greek texts of Ben Sira, and highlights significant discrepancies for topics related to sexuality. The discrepant verses she targets include BBS/Sir 41,22, about which she notes that the Hebrew text of “MS M suggests that even one's own maidservant should not be approached for sexual intercourse” but in the Greek text “it is another man's maidservant who should not be approached”. If the Greek translation “is not a scribal error, perhaps it suggests that the translator is

more lenient... in line with popular values at the time and values reflected in the law" (155).

In the introduction, Balla states that the current study "will seek to demonstrate that the author's view on sexuality is complex, subtle, and depends on the context of the individual sayings" (10). Among the "complex" and "subtle" features of the texts that she notes are the parallels between attitudes toward females and those toward males, on which she has a number of comments throughout the book. For example, she notes that in BBS/Sir 7,23-25 "the context in the Hebrew text suggests that Ben Sira is concerned with the marriage of sons and daughters, therefore with the sexuality of both male and female children" (37). This is also another instance in which the Greek text has a "significant" difference from the Hebrew, since the Greek lacks mention of early marriage for sons. Balla's foregrounding of comments that are applicable to males as well as to females is a refreshing shift of emphasis.

A downside occurs, however, in the presentation of Balla's extensive compilation of previous scholarship, which includes material such as citations for alternative translations, reconstructions of Hebrew, and scholarly opinions on interpretation. All of these elements contribute to her overall goal, but the dense text that results from this quantity of information can be hard for a reader to parse because the graphical presentation is at a fairly uniform level of emphasis. Greater distinction between major and minor components would be welcome, so that her comments and the most cogent of her citations could stand out from the flock of specific, brief references. This situation is somewhat balanced by her use of a "Conclusion" section at the end of each chapter.

Furthermore, the absence of BBS/Sir 40:20b (MS B, *וּמִשְׁנֵיהֶם אָהֳבָה* וּדְרִים) is puzzling because *דְרִים* is a word that requires comment, whether or not one agrees with John J. Collins that "*dodim* is specifically sexual lovemaking" ("Marriage, Divorce, and Family in Second Temple Judaism", *Families in Ancient Israel* [eds. L.G. Perdue et al.] [Louisville 1997] 136). He and numerous other scholars translate the word thus, and the word is used in biblical books that share themes with BBS/Sirach (see Prov 7,16, as well as Song 1,2,4; 4,10ab; 5,1; and 7,3).

Also, for BBS/Sirach 42,11a, Balla cites the commentary of Skehan - Di Lella (*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 477, 480), who explain that "MS B is fragmentary but has traces of בְּנִי (= Syr)" (42, n. 71). Neither they, nor Balla, mention the text Beentjes gives for the margin note in MS B (*רַבָּה ע' ב' הַחֹזֶק מִשְׁמֵר*), which has *רַבָּה*, "slander", though in construct form as it is in colon 11c. BBS (M) 42,11a is blank until *בֵּית חֲזַן מִשְׁמֵר* and MS B has even less of colon 11a. Beentjes (*Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*, 73, 117, 168) does not mention בְּנִי "my son".

Balla's work fills in areas of investigation that are underrepresented in the benchmark commentary by Skehan and Di Lella (*Wisdom of Ben*

Sira), and provides a balanced response to Trenchard's foundational text on these particular topics (*Ben Sira's View of Women*). She concludes that "Trenchard is correct in asserting that Ben Sira has some of the most negative comments on women in contemporary Jewish and earlier Biblical literature, but at times he fails to identify the positive comments, and despite his thorough textual analysis the differences between the Hebrew and Greek texts are not always emphasized" (9). A third text whose range Balla extends is Wright's overview of differences between the Hebrew and Greek texts (*No Small Difference*).

Ben Sira on Family, Gender, and Sexuality is a valuable addition to Ben Sira scholarship and enlarges the scope of discussions of the portrayal of females — and males — in the Ben Sira texts.

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Novum Testamentum

Geir Otto HOLMÅS, *Prayer and Vindication in Luke-Acts*. The Theme of Prayer within the Context of the Legitimizing and Edifying Objective of the Lukan Narrative (Library of New Testament Studies 433). New York – London, T&T Clark, 2011. xvi-300 p. 15,5 × 24.5. \$ 70.00

This study follows several other Lucan prayer monographs which the author finds wanting for being too selective in the passages treated, or for being narratively inattentive, or for failing adequately to coordinate prayer to the purpose of Luke's larger project or to his community's situation, or for simply misconstruing his meaning. By citing contrary evidence, Holmås casts doubt on the theses of prior studies on prayer, for example, that Luke aims to teach Christology, or to sustain his readership in the face of the *parousia*'s delay and/or violent persecution, or to sell Christianity to pagans.

Holmås's own thesis is that Luke has two goals relative to prayer, apologetic and paraenetic, that are coordinated to each other and to his main objective. Luke aimed to produce a two-volume history of the early Christian movement for a mixed Gentile-Jewish congregation whose faith and loyalty were threatened by marginalization and opposition and by the doubts this cast upon the movement's legitimacy. Mentioning prayer strategically throughout Luke-Acts, Luke constructed for "insiders" a narrative apology for Christianity as accredited by Israel's God by showing that the formation and development of the Christian movement was the result of God's response to the prayer of his faithful; therefore, Luke's congregation could feel legitimated and encouraged also to pray before the *eschaton*, which was closer at the time of Luke's composition than during Jesus' ministry.

Prior to any exegesis, Holmås surveys extensively Luke's prayer vocabulary, its syntactic and syntagmatic patterns, and its distribution in Luke-Acts. He decides to focus his study almost exclusively on passages employing terminology for generic prayer (προσεύχομαι/προσευχή) or petitionary prayer (e.g., δέομαι/δέσις), while largely setting aside praise (e.g., αἰνέω, δοξάζω, εὐλογέω) and thanksgiving (e.g., εὐχαριστέω), as well as liturgy and worship (e.g., λατρεύω, προσκυνέω). He counts the last as marginal to prayer proper as dialogue or communion with God. The second are discounted because their character is "responsorial". The first are chosen for their "catalyzing" nature (46-47).

Holmås begins his exegetical analysis with the infancy narrative. While the people pray (1,10), the ministering Zechariah receives angelic assurance that his petition has been heard (1,13). God vindicates Israel's faithful who pray! The same is demonstrated by the praying Anna and Simeon, the former thanking God for Jerusalem's redemption now at hand (2,38) and the latter entrusting himself in death to God who fulfills in Jesus his promise of Israel's salvation (2,28-32).

Holmås then proceeds to examine Jesus' prayer activity. Because in Acts (2,22-24; 10,36-43) Luke will maintain that God accompanied and accredited Jesus in his mission and ultimately vindicated him by the resurrection, Luke shows Jesus praying throughout the gospel. During prayer Jesus is anointed with the Spirit for his mission (Luke 3,21-22), and Jesus punctuates his activity with prayer (5,16). Through prayer he comes to understand his mission as entailing suffering (9,18.22), and as he prays heaven affirms him in this understanding (9,28-36). Following prayer (6,12), and therefore with divine sanction, Jesus chooses the Twelve who shall be his post-resurrection witnesses (Acts 10,39) and who receive from the praying Jesus insight into God (Luke 10,21-22) and instruction in prayer (11,1-4). Praying, Jesus accepts death as his Father's will (22,42-44); and as he dies, he entrusts himself to the Father (23,36). Before his passion, Jesus' prayer for Peter (22,32) ensures his eventual conversion and authenticates his subsequent leadership. And as he dies, Jesus' prayer (22,34) for the Jerusalem Jews responsible for his death establishes their ignorance and justifies the apostles' later offer of forgiveness as consonant with God's plan (Acts 2,23.36-38; 3,14-20).

Next Holmås rereads the gospel for Jesus' teaching about prayer by example and word. Having witnessed Jesus' own practice of prayer (Luke 5,16; 6,12; 9,18.28-29), the disciples ask him to teach them to pray (11,1), and he does so in a discourse (11,2-13) containing the "Our Father", as a model, and exhortations to pray based on God's father-like providence. An invitation into Jesus' own prayer-revealed relationship to God (10,21-22), the Lord's Prayer is oriented to the *eschaton* and inculcates vigilance against temptation. In the face of the approaching *eschaton* too, Jesus teaches prayer-filled vigilance in 18,1-8, when he insists that God will not delay in vindicating his elect who pray, and then again in 21,36. Despite Jesus' example and directives, the disciples are not shown praying and indeed are noted as having failed to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane (22,40-46). A transformation is glimpsed at the end of the gospel, when they worship Jesus and continually bless God in the temple (24,52-53). This transformation is completed in Acts when in fulfillment of Jesus' promise the Father grants the Holy Spirit to disciples who pray (Luke 11,13; Acts 1,14; 2,1-4; 4,24-31) and in obedience to Jesus' teaching the disciples pray for their enemies' forgiveness (Luke 6,28; Acts 7,60; 26,29) and for additional laborers in the mission field (Luke 10,2; Acts 6,4-6; 13,2-3).

Dividing his treatment of Acts into two parts, Holmås first deals with chapters 1-12. He foregrounds the effectiveness of Jesus' prayer education as the disciples persist in prayer (1,14; 2,42.46; 3,1), even as the characters of the infancy narrative had done, especially in times of opposition (4,24-31) or need for guidance (1,24) or healing (9,40). They entrust themselves to the Lord (4,24-31; 7,59; 12,5.12; 14,23.26) who consistently responds to vindicate and sustain them. The disciples' prayer at-

tends the foundational moment on Pentecost (1,14; 2,1-4) and the reconstitution of the Twelve (1,24-25), who eventually come to dedicate themselves entirely and equally to prayer and the ministry of the word (6,4), to which God gives success (6,7; 8,25). Prayer accompanies also boundary-crossing events and moments in which the Christian movement takes new departures, such as the Samaritan Pentecost (8,15-17), the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch (8,26-39), the Gentile Pentecost (10,1-48), and the conversion of Saul (9,11-17). In these prayer episodes, the Spirit's action expresses God's initiative and/or approval, even as God's Spirit anointed Jesus for his mission as he prayed (Luke 3,21-22).

Treating Acts 13-28, Holmås focuses on Paul's mission, wherein prayer references employing the usual vocabulary are admittedly scant. Also, the outpourings of the Spirit evidenced consistently earlier in Acts are not found herein, but only the Spirit's requisitioning of Paul and Barnabas for the mission as the Antiochenes "worship" (13,2). Still, prayer figures at critical moments, such as the launch of the mission leading to the inclusion of Gentiles (13,3) and then the gospel's first incursion into Europe (16,13), in order to show God's approval and help (14,26-27; 16,14). In association with prayer (16,13.25), the God-fearer Lydia and the pagan jailer are converted, so, as previously, to imply God's accreditation also of these conversions. In prayer, Paul receives divine guidance for the mission (22,17-18). Prayer accompanies Paul's miracle-working (28,8). Through prayer, Paul and his missionary companions are entrusted to God (13,3; 14,26; 15,40), and they entrust leaders and fellow believers (14,23; 20,32-36). Paul and his associates pray in the face of opposition and persecution (16,16.25) and miraculously prevail (16,18.26). Through prayer, they accept God's will (20,22-25.36-37; 21,4-6.13-14) as did Jesus. Indeed, Paul and they exhibit exemplary piety (13,3; 14,23; 16,3.16) in continuity with Israel and sharing its hope of final vindication in the resurrection (22,17; 24,11.14; 26,7.23).

Holmås's study is well done. It is exegetically insightful at every turn; for example, when relative to Luke 11,13, Holmås argues that the Spirit is not the replacement for what disciples request, or even the epitome of God's gifts, but the first of his gifts (137). It is narratively sensitive; for example, when Holmås suggests that in Acts 12 Peter's rescue through prayer (vv. 5.12) is to be contrasted to Herod's death because of his failure to glorify God (v. 23; cf. p. 213). In its details and as a whole, Holmås's work exhibits due but critical indebtedness to prior studies, as well as originality as it supplements them insightfully by a consistent focus on the apologetic and paraenetic aspects of Luke's story of prayer.

Although this reviewer would grant that Holmås has brought to light major aims of Luke's prayer motif, he would not be equally inclined to grant that Holmås has accomplished his own aims. He intimates that, unlike prior studies, his work represents a "comprehensive reassessment" of prayer's "fundamental function" in Luke-Acts (2,16), but then he fo-

cuses on generic or supplicatory prayer to the near, but not total, exclusion of praise/thanksgiving and liturgy/worship, precisely because such seem to serve “different function(s)” (46). Yet, in Luke’s presentation, such distinctions are not so neat, as Holmås himself indirectly acknowledges when he is constrained to argue for prayer as to be understood in episodes where Luke uses only cultic terms (Acts 8,27; 13,2; 24,11.14; 26,7; 27,23) or the language of entrustment (15,40; 20,32). In fact, in Luke’s usage praise and thanksgiving constitute prayer (e.g., Luke 18,10-11; Acts 2,42.47), as is also hymn-singing (16,26). This too Holmås acknowledges indirectly by his treatment of Jesus’ thanksgiving in Luke 10,21, but even as early as Anna’s thanksgiving (2,38) and Simeon’s blessing of God (2,28); προσεύχομαι occurs in relation to neither, yet both are clearly prayer, as much as the people’s prayer and Zechariah’s petition (1,10.13). Indeed, by these very figures Luke seems to imply his understanding of a complementarity in prayer between petition and blessing/thanksgiving, so that Holmås’s study which regularly neglects praise cannot unquestionably be said to have deciphered prayer’s “fundamental function” in Luke-Acts.

Unfortunate is Holmås’s decision to forego treatment of instances of individuals calling upon Jesus’ name (Acts 2,21; 7,59; 9,14; 9,21; 22,16; cf. p. 26), with the sole exception of Acts 7,59 in which the verb employed in this expression, ἐπικαλέομαι, introduces a quoted petition. Yet, everywhere Luke employs ἐπικαλέομαι, it means “to appeal to” or “to make petition to” even when God is not the recipient of such appeal (e.g., 25,11.12.21.25). Therefore, Holmås is mistaken in understanding “calling upon Jesus’ name” as indicating only a profession of faith and discounting its treatment on that basis; rather, the expression properly indicates a prayer or an appeal to Jesus, which necessarily also implies faith in him (cf. Rom 10,12-14). Thus, Paul’s calling upon Jesus’ name before his baptism (Acts 22,16), signifies his praying to Jesus, so that, as Jesus, he, too, receives the Spirit during prayer.

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David J. RUDOLPH, *A Jew to the Jews*. Jewish Contours of Pauline Flexibility in 1 Corinthians 9:19-32 (WUNT II/304; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2011) xii-290 pp.

Esta monografía es el fruto de la revisión de la tesis doctoral que David Rudolph defendió en la Universidad de Cambridge (2007), bajo la guía de M. Bockmuehl, y con la que logró el Premio Franz Delitzsch de la Freie Theologische Akademie. La pregunta fundamental del estudio, “¿se puede entender 1 Cor 9,19-23 como el discurso de un judío observante de la Ley?” (2), nace no sólo de un interés académico sino de una inquietud

tud existencial, ya que el prof. Rudolph es judío mesiánico comprometido con la causa de su Iglesia (cf. IDEM, "Messianic Jews and Christian Theology: Restoring an Historical Voice to the Contemporary Discussion", *Pro Ecclesia* 14 [2005] 58-84).

La tesis de la obra es enunciada en la p. 19: "The primary aim of the monograph is to demonstrate that scholars overstate their case when they maintain that 1 Cor 9:19-23 is incompatible with a Torah-observant Paul. A secondary aim is to show how one might understand 1 Cor 9:19-23 as the words of a law-abiding Jew". Rudolph nota que 1 Cor 9,19-23 ha sido empleado por muchos exégetas como un pasaje cardinal para demostrar que Pablo no era un judío observante. Los asertos paulinos, "con los judíos *me he hecho judío*" y "con los que están bajo la Ley, como quien está bajo la Ley, *sin estar bajo la Ley*" (9,20), suelen ser interpretados como pruebas de que el apóstol consideraba la observancia de la Ley como un *adiaphoron*, un indiferente al que se podía sujetar o no según la circunstancia misionera. En cambio, Rudolph intenta demostrar que este texto no es contradictorio con la imagen de un Pablo observante de la Ley. Para ello, propone una discusión bien organizada a partir de tres razones: el argumento intertextual (cap. 2), el argumento contextual acerca de 1 Cor 8,1-11,1 (cap. 3) y el argumento textual sobre 1 Cor 9,19-23 (cap. 4).

En su discusión intertextual (cap. 2), Rudolph trae a colación un primer grupo de textos que suelen ser aducidos para sostener que Pablo consideraba su antigua identidad judía superada en Cristo: He 16,3; Ro 14; 1 Cor 7,19; 10,32; Ga 1,13; 2,14; 3,28; 5,6; 6,15; Flp 3,8. El autor intenta, en cambio, probar que estos textos podían ser plausiblemente aceptados por judíos observantes en la época y que tan sólo revelan que ser en Cristo es un *plus* de sentido, sin erradicar la precedente identidad judía de los fieles de Jesús procedentes de la sinagoga. Así por ejemplo, según Rudolph, las afirmaciones de 1 Cor 7,19; Ga 5,6; 6,15 ("la circuncisión no es nada") no eliminan las diferencias de identidad sino que tan solo indican que la circuncisión no cuenta para la salvación y que ser judío es menos importante que ser en Cristo. Más aún, según el autor, dicho lenguaje que trataba de evitar que los gentiles se circuncidaran resulta ser paradójicamente un modo de mantener la distinción entre judíos y gentiles, ya que unos deben seguir cumpliendo la Ley mientras que los otros permanecen libres de ella (28-30). Seguidamente, Rudolph estudia un segundo grupo de textos favorables a su hipótesis, ya que invitan a pensar que ser judío es una llamada en Cristo: He 21,17-26; 1 Cor 7,17-24, etc. Aquí el autor propone que, si bien la observancia de la Ley no es un medio de salvación, no en vano, el cumplimiento de la Ley no es cancelado para los seguidores de Cristo procedentes del judaísmo porque "los dones y la llamada de Dios son irrevocables" (Ro 11,29). Este capítulo acerca de la discusión intertextual es el más amplio y, a mi modo de ver, el mejor elaborado.

En el cap. 3, Rudolph examina el contexto del pasaje 1 Cor 8,1–11,1. Pablo urge a abstenerse de toda comida de la que se sepa que ha sido sacrificada a los ídolos —es el caso de las celebradas en los templos—, mientras que permite comerla cuando no se tenga conciencia de ello: la comprada en el *macellum* o servida en una casa, siempre que nadie mencione su origen. Rudolph estudia si esta posición era consistente con el decreto apostólico y trata de replicar a los que consideran que esta respuesta es irreconciliable con una actitud observante de la Ley. Al final expone brevemente la función de 1 Cor 9, como ejemplo paulino de renuncia a los propios derechos. A lo largo del capítulo, Rudolph intenta probar que el trasfondo de algunos términos es judío. Por ello, él concluye que la perspectiva que el apóstol adopta en 1 Cor 8,1–11,1 está marcada por su matriz judía (108). Esta conclusión puede ser cierta en lo que afirma pero no en lo que parece negar. Se podrían aducir igualmente términos y *topoi* procedentes del ambiente helenístico usados por Pablo en la sección. De hecho, el siguiente pasaje, 1 Cor 9,24–27, estrechamente unido a 9,19–23 por la inclusión del léxico de la esclavitud (δουλόω, δουλαγωγέω; vv. 19.27), utiliza el imaginario de las competiciones atléticas y pugilísticas, consideradas idolátricas por los judíos.

El cap. 4 está dedicado al argumento textual. Aquí Rudolph trata de probar que las afirmaciones de 1 Cor 9,19–23 deben ser explicadas a partir del contexto judío. Su perspectiva es histórico-crítica; por ello, tras negar el trasfondo helenístico del pasaje, busca ejemplos antiguos acerca de la acomodación judía. Él evidencia textos en los que se dice que los fariseos se acomodaban a los judíos comunes y aduce dos relatos en los que judíos piosos comparten la mesa con gentiles (*Jdt* 12,17–19; *Let. Arist.* 181–185.275: 127–130). Rudolph ve en estos textos antecedentes de la acomodación paulina que, según él, debe ser leída en el marco de la pluralidad de ideas judías en el periodo del Segundo Templo. Más aún, él sugiere que la actitud de Pablo en 1 Cor 9,19–23 es afín a la actitud apologético-misionera de algunos métodos de proselitismo farisaico que él trata de identificar (123–142). En la segunda parte del capítulo, el autor se detiene a analizar algunas expresiones de 1 Cor 9,19–23.

En particular, no me parece adecuado su estudio de ὑπὸ νόμον (153–159). Rudolph trata los paralelos (Ro 6,14–15; Ga 3,23; 4,4; 5,21; 5,18) y concluye que Pablo usa la expresión con diferentes matices en contextos diversos. Él trata de desligar 1 Cor 9,20 de los otros textos donde se usa el sintagma, aduciendo 1 Cor 15,56 (“el poder del pecado es la Ley”) y diciendo que aquí “Ley” no se refiere solamente a la Ley mosaica, sino que es un término más genérico, para indicar la “ley divina” en general. Parte de aquí para sugerir que Pablo usa ὑπὸ νόμον en 1 Cor 9,20 no para referirse a la Ley mosaica, *sensu stricto*, sino para indicar una interpretación específica de la Ley: la farisaica (no termino de captar como una cosa lleva a la otra). Así pues, cuando Pablo dice hacerse “bajo la Ley”,

se estaría refiriendo a comer con fariseos. Estimo que la propuesta es bastante arriesgada, ya que no hay ningún elemento en el texto que apoye su lectura. Por eso, el autor debería dar argumentos sólidos, pero tan solo refiere el supuesto paralelo de Flp 3,5 (“en cuanto a la Ley, fariseo”) y otros argumentos de menor fuerza. Considero, por tanto, que esta interpretación –base de la propuesta que realizará en el cap. 5– es bastante opinable e infundada.

En el último capítulo, Rudolph formula su propuesta de lectura. 1 Cor 9,19-23 es leído como el discurso de un judío observante en el marco del judaísmo plural del Segundo Templo. Más concretamente, Pablo tendría en mente a los judíos comunes cuando decía “hacerse judío”, a los fariseos o a judíos más estrictos cuando decía acomodarse a “los que están bajo la Ley” y a los pecadores, cuando mencionaba a “los que están sin Ley”. Con esta actitud, Pablo imita la tradición evangélica de Jesús (cf. 1 Cor 11,1) quien también comió con judíos, fariseos y pecadores.

En general, la obra destaca por el orden en la exposición y por la cantidad de autores con los que dialoga; uno de los principales valores del libro es la ingente bibliografía que aporta. Como el mismo autor sugiere (18), la primera parte en la que cuestiona las posturas de los que ven en 1 Cor 9,19-23 un testimonio irrefutable de un Pablo no observante de la Ley (cap. 2-4) está más sólidamente probada que su propuesta de lectura (cap. 5) acerca de la acomodación paulina a judíos, fariseos y pecadores.

Por último, me gustaría hacer una crítica de base al planteamiento de la monografía: Rudolph es poco sensible al espesor retórico de un texto cuya función retórico-ejemplar requiere dicha sensibilidad. Pablo no aduce 1 Cor 9,19-23 para informar de cómo se conducía en la misión, sino para persuadir a los corintios a que renunciaran a sus derechos. Y en un *exemplum*, la utilidad persuasiva gobierna el *illustrans*, hecho o actitud ejemplar aducido por un autor para ilustrar su caso. Aquí, la utilidad del caso es que los fuertes de Corinto acepten renunciar a su derecho (ἐξουσία) a comer los *idolotitos* para no causar el tropiezo (πρόσκομμα) de los débiles (1 Cor 8,9). Este caso rige la *inventio* de 1 Cor 9 y la elección de los términos empleados en él. Por ello, Pablo aduce su derecho (ἐξουσία) a ser mantenido por la comunidad (9,4-6.12.18) o habla del “obstáculo” (ἐγκοπή: 9,12). Igualmente en 9,19-23, el apóstol emplea el vocabulario de la libertad (ἐλεύθερος, δουλόω: 9,19; cf. 10,29) y menciona a los débiles (9,22; cf. 8,7.9.10) porque eran elementos significativos para el problema enunciado en 1 Cor 8 y retomado en 1 Cor 10,14–11,1. Este fenómeno invita a buscar la *inventio* del vocabulario de νόμος (9,20-21) no tanto en el trasfondo (griego y/o judío) cuanto en la *utilitas* ejemplar: ante quienes reclamaban sus derechos y el ejercicio de su libertad (8,1-13; cf. 6,12), es adecuado presentar el *exemplum* de uno que se ha hecho esclavo, más aún, se ha sujetado tanto a los que están bajo la ley, sea cual sea ésta, como a los que están sin ley, para ganarlos al bien mayor del evangelio. Evidentemente

esta consideración no desautoriza la investigación exegética acerca del trasfondo del *illustrans* paulino. Ciertamente Pablo se estaba refiriendo a *algo* cuando decía adaptarse a los diferentes grupos. Pero dicha búsqueda debe partir del carácter primordial de la *utilitas* ejemplar, cosa que echo en falta en la monografía de Rudolph.

En cualquier caso, recomiendo vivamente su lectura ya que cuestiona una idea bastante consensuada entre los exégetas –que 1 Cor 9,19-23 es una prueba de que Pablo no observó la Ley tras su llamada– y ofrece suficientes argumentos como para aceptar que su hipótesis es plausible.

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Brian J. ABASCIANO, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9,10-18. An Intertextual and Theological Exegesis* (Library of New Testament Studies 317) London – New York, T & T Clark, 2011. xiv-252 p. 15,6 × 23,5.

Il volume di B.J. Abasciano è il secondo passo di un'opera iniziata con un primo volume su Rm 9,1-9 (B.J. Abasciano, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9,1-9. An Intertextual and Theological Exegesis* [JSNTSS 301; London – New York 2005]) e che è intesa concludersi con un terzo volume su Rm 9,19-33 (1).

Lo scopo e l'approccio al soggetto sono presentati nel primo volume e succintamente ripresi nel libro in questione. Si tratta di cogliere il significato esegetico-teologico di Romani 9 analizzando l'uso che Paolo in questo testo fa dell'AT. Il tipo di approccio è intertestuale, che significa studiare i testi dell'AT utilizzati nel loro contesto originale, cogliere la storia della loro interpretazione nel giudaismo e nella cristianità contemporanea a Paolo e infine confrontare i risultati di queste analisi con l'interpretazione che Paolo fa di quegli stessi testi.

L'intertestualità in questo caso comporta il cercare di illuminare le parole e il pensiero di Paolo con tutte le possibili armonie di significato, di tradizione teologica, di input interpretativi che i testi citati e allusi portano con loro.

Il lavoro di Abasciano in questo è molto rigoroso. Prendendo in esame i due passaggi di Rm 9,10-13 e Rm 9,14-18, il primo passaggio dello studio è l'analisi dei testi citati (Gen 25,23 e Mal 1,2-3 per Rm 9,10-13; e Es 9,16, avendo già provveduto a una esegesi contestualizzata di Es 33,19b nel suo primo volume, per Rm 9,14-18). È una esegesi serrata, ampia e ragionata, sicuramente uno dei pregi principali del lavoro (capitoli 2, 3 e 6, [3-15; 16-21 e 75-140]).

Il secondo passaggio è una succinta rilevazione delle tradizioni interpretative di questi testi nella letteratura giudaica ed eventualmente cristiana precedente e coeva a Paolo (22-36 per Gen 25,23 e Mal 1,2-3; e 141-153 per Es 9,16, rispettivamente i capitoli 4 e 7).

Il terzo passaggio è la ripresa dei due brani di Rm 9,10-13 e Rm 9,14-18 alla luce dei risultati dell'esegesi contestuale e della tradizione interpretativa su di essi (capitoli 5 e 8, [37-74 e 154-224]). È a questo punto che l'a. affronta le maggiori implicazioni dei testi citati per l'interpretazione di Romani 9. Significativi a riguardo sono i titoli di questi due capitoli perché rivelano le questioni esegetico-teologiche discusse: "Not by works, but by the One who calls: Romans 9,10-13" e "Is there unrighteousness with God? Romans 9,14-18". In effetti sono messe a tema due grosse istanze che emergono dal testo di Romani 9-11. La prima è il carattere dell'elezione, le sue condizioni e i soggetti che essa implica (Dio, Israele e i Gentili), fino a presagire gli esiti. La seconda riguarda invece la giustizia di Dio nel suo modo di operare l'elezione.

L'a. non fa mistero delle sue conclusioni a riguardo, forte di tutta la mole di accurata esegesi prodotta sia nell'analisi dei testi dell'AT, sia in quella di Rm 9,10-18. Egli così intende dimostrare la pertinenza di un tale approccio ai testi paolini (e al NT in genere), la quale appare promettente.

In effetti, a partire dal pionieristico studio di R.B Hays (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven – London 1989]) si sono moltiplicati i tentativi di ricerca in questo campo, soprattutto per i testi paolini, suscitando vive reazioni pro e contro a tale approccio e alimentando un dibattito tanto vivace, quanto fecondo intorno alla questione dell'uso delle Scritture in Paolo.

Ora, mi sembra, che è proprio a partire dai risultati che si può valutare la pertinenza di un certo modo di procedere.

Per quello che riguarda il volume in questione risultano due grandi conclusioni al netto dell'esegesi svolta. La prima è che, in base anche all'uso tipologico dei testi di Gen 25,23 e Mal 1,2-3 che Paolo opererebbe, solo coloro che credono in Cristo sono a pieno titolo eredi delle promesse dell'Alleanza (cf. 70). Questo perché fin dall'inizio il piano di Dio elettivo si è svolto non tenendo in conto le opere o l'appartenenza etnica, ma la fede (cf. 70). Così si intravede già la nuova realtà della Chiesa fatta principalmente da Gentili, e invece l'Israele etnico si ritrova in una situazione difettosa, avendo basato tutto sulle opere e sull'etnicità (cf. 73). Senza entrare in tutti i dettagli dell'esposizione, quello che mi interessa rilevare è che tutto questo –eventualmente– può essere affermato prendendo in esame tutti e tre i capitoli di Romani 9-11. Di certo a questo stadio dell'argomentazione realtà e concetti come fede, Alleanza, Gentili, Israele etnico sono fuori luogo e non pertinenti, semplicemente perché Paolo non sta parlando di queste cose in Romani 9,10-18, casomai sta preparando il terreno per svilupparle in seguito. L'a. in questo modo, pur rilevando in

modo accurato temi importanti e significativi, a mezzo di una dettagliata esegesi, tuttavia non riesce a far cogliere il proprio di questi versetti.

La seconda grande conclusione riguarda la giustizia di Dio nell'operare nel modo in cui opera. Abasciano ritiene che, in base all'esegesi dei testi citati e di Rm 9,14-18, Dio non è ingiusto nello scegliere senza guardare ad opere o alla stirpe (cf. 170). Egli nello scegliere il suo popolo in modo misericordioso lo fa a una sola condizione: la fede (cf. 181,190 e 222). Inoltre l'indurimento di Faraone, che — attraverso la tipologia — è applicato allo stato attuale dell'Israele etnico, è all'interno del grande disegno di Alleanza sempre rinnovata e compiuta perché la benedizione promessa arrivi a tutti i popoli (cf. 200-203, 213 e 222-224). Così si apre la strada alla chiamata dei Gentili nella Chiesa. Anche qui non possiamo valutare in dettaglio tutti i passaggi della riflessione dell'a., ma le numerose e attente annotazioni esegetiche, molto spesso azzeccate, offrono un risultato globale che invece non convince, semplicemente, come già notato, perché anticipa le conclusioni di tutta l'argomentazione di Romani 9-11 ad uno stadio prematuro e per questo improprio.

Il vocabolario, le insistenze, e i temi messi in gioco in Romani 9,6-29 non permettono assolutamente di parlare di fede, né di qualsiasi concorso umano, quindi nemmeno di Alleanza, tanto meno di Gesù Cristo e di Chiesa. È un capitolo tutto teo-logico. Solo leggendo Romani 10-11 si può allora intravedere anche in Rm 9 qualche avvisaglia di tutto lo sviluppo argomentativo dei tre capitoli. Ma occorre rispettare il proprio di Romani 9 e il suo peculiare uso delle Scritture.

Il lavoro profuso da Abasciano ha fatto dire fin troppo a Paolo in Rm 9 e alla fine non consente di cogliere ciò che è proprio di questo primo passo dell'argomentazione.

Le implicazioni metodologiche di questa sommaria disamina sono varie. Innanzitutto lo studio dell'uso delle Scritture in Paolo esige la massima attenzione. Il tentativo di Abasciano è coraggioso, perché si tratta di una ermeneutica, per così dire, alla seconda potenza: cercare di interpretare ciò che Paolo ha interpretato di alcuni testi biblici. Per questo occorrono dei criteri molto oggettivi e precisi per non concedere troppo a una interpretazione personale. Il primo di questi è la differenza funzionale, ma anche ermeneutica, tra le citazioni e le allusioni o altri riferimenti scritturistici. Il peso ermeneutico è estremamente diverso giacché la citazione è espressamente riferimento ad una istanza autorevole e nel caso di Paolo ad una istanza rivelativa. Non così tutti gli altri riferimenti scritturistici che hanno altre funzioni nell'argomentazione, ma non di espresso tenore rivelativo. In pratica Paolo fa parlare le Scritture per far parlare Dio, cioè quando non può affermare da sé qualcosa, ma ha bisogno di un'istanza superiore. Da questo discende, contrariamente a quanto ripetutamente afferma l'a. che non necessariamente il contesto originale dei testi citati sia determinante le scelte di questi. Spesso è sufficiente anche

solo una parola che Paolo non può dire da sé per mettere in gioco una citazione. Il contesto di Gen 25,23 e di Mal 1,2-3 possono essere interessanti, ma di fatto, Paolo usa tali testi per dire una cosa precisa, e cioè che la scelta di Giacobbe su Esaù è indipendente da qualsiasi fattore umano.

Il secondo grande criterio è che nel caso di Romani 9-11 (e in genere in Paolo) non sono le Scritture a guidare l'argomentazione, bensì il contrario. Una maggiore attenzione allora all'impianto retorico di Romani 9 avrebbe giovato molto ad Abasciano. In effetti, ha fatto dire troppo ai testi scritturistici, perché non ha sufficientemente valutato le dinamiche argomentative di Rm 9. Già la scelta di esaminare Rm 9,10-18 è singolare, giacché Rm 9,10-13 è chiaramente in collegamento con ciò che precede. Il brano, infatti, fa parte delle prime prove di Rm 9,6-13, mentre Rm 9,14-18 insieme a Rm 9,19-23 sono un secondo passo. La divisione così operata non fa cogliere in modo adeguato la dinamica argomentativa.

A conclusione, nonostante le mie critiche, stimo il volume come un ottimo lavoro. Esso mostra una grande profusione di dati, un'accorta e dettagliata analisi esegetico-teologica, e alcuni *excursus* molto interessanti (61-62 sulla struttura teologica dell'elezione in Paolo; 98-99 sul rapporto tra segni e indurimenti in Esodo e 156-162 sull'uso dell'ebraico nei testi usati da Paolo dall'AT). Il capitolo finale (225-228) inoltre offre due brevi ma argomentate implicazioni del lavoro svolto, la prima che riguarda alcuni aspetti da correggere nella *new perspective* e la seconda a proposito del testo dell'AT (greco o ebraico) utilizzato da Paolo.

Ci auguriamo solo che il terzo volume tenga maggiormente in conto la retorica del brano di Rm 9,19-33.

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Varia

Jodi MAGNESS, *Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit. Jewish Daily Life in the Time of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, Michigan – Cambridge, U.K., William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011, xv-335 p. 15 × 22,5.

L'Autrice di questo libro è Professore di Early Judaism all'Università della North Carolina a Chapel Hill. Precedentemente si era già occupata dell'archeologia di Qumran, oltre che dei primi insediamenti islamici in Palestina, con due rispettivi studi.

Il volume attuale prende in esame la vita quotidiana dei Giudei nell'arco di tempo che va sostanzialmente dalla metà del secolo I a.C. (praticamente dalla fine della dinastia asmonea con l'inizio del regno di Erode il Grande) fino all'anno 70 d.C. Va subito precisato che oggetto di studio è solo il giudaismo della terra d'Israele, mentre nulla si dice dei Giudei della diaspora (a parte un cenno a p. 186), che certo meriterebbero un'analoga ricerca a sé stante, magari per settori geo-culturali. Nell'insieme si tratta di una indagine molto ben documentata, benché non esaustiva, e più che sufficiente per dare un'idea concreta della "daily life in the time of Jesus", che qui di seguito riferisco per sommi capi.

Dopo un primo capitolo, opportunamente dedicato alla condizione religiosa e socio-economica della popolazione della Palestina rapportata alla situazione di Gesù (1-15), l'Autrice struttura la sua indagine prendendo in esame una decina di aspetti della quotidianità giudaica: la purificazione rituale, l'alimentazione, il vasellame domestico, i costumi conviviali, l'osservanza del Sabato, la monetazione, il vestiario, i bagni, le toilette, le sepolture con le tombe.

Il capitolo intitolato "Purifying the Body and Hands" (16-31) ricorda che in Palestina sono state trovate circa 700 *miqva'ot*, di cui la maggior parte associata al Tempio (tra cui l'enorme piscina di Siloe di Gv 9,7 adeguata ad una massa di pellegrini), mentre nei singoli villaggi ne sono attestate da una a sette (ma nessuna a Cafarnao e probabilmente neanche a Nazaret). Si discute poi l'uso di lavarsi le mani prima dei pasti, che era prescritto dai Farisei, mentre sarebbe stato necessario solo per gli alimenti consacrati; su questo punto Gesù è contrario ai Farisei ma non risulterebbe che egli rigettasse le leggi che proibivano di mangiare animali impuri (anche se la tradizione successiva avrebbe ampliato). Si discute anche la formula rabbinica secondo cui i rotoli biblici e quelli non biblici rendono le mani impure/pure, ma la questione non ha a che fare con Gesù.

Segue il capitolo "Creeping and Swarming Creatures, Locusts, Fish, Dogs, Chickens, and Pigs" (32-53), che prende le mosse dalla menzione dei cani in Mt 7,6 e del moscerino e del cammello in Mt 23,13-36. La Magness traccia un quadro interessante su purità/impurità di vari animali. Per esempio,

le otto specie di animali elencate in Lev 11,29-30 sono semplicemente considerate impure dai rabbini, mentre a Qumran sono anche considerate fonte di impurità. Così, mentre i rabbini condannavano il filtraggio del vino e dell'aceto per rimuovere gli insetti alati, permettendone la manducazione, a Qumran essi erano proibiti e l'archeologia non vi ha trovato nessuno strumento da filtro, così come mancano ossa di polli e di cani, oltre che di suini. Locuste e pesci a Qumran erano permessi solo se erano cotti vivi prima di mangiarli, ma non da morti, mentre i rabbini lo permettevano. Inoltre i rabbini non accettavano che la carne consumata a Gerusalemme fosse solo di sacrifici. Nei palazzi di Masada, Gerico ed Herodion le anfore trovate con ossa di pesce suggeriscono l'importazione del *garum* dai Romani.

Il capitolo "Household Vessels: Pottery, Oil Lamps, Glass, Stone, and Dung" (53-76) tratta anzitutto di stoviglie, sia importate (prevalentemente in *terra sigillata*, cioè terracotta rivestita di una patina di vernice vetrosa sottile e lucida, presente specie in Galilea, mentre a Gerusalemme [ma anche a Gamla] le classi alte attestano l'uso di tegami piatti di foggia romana, mentre il quartiere giudaico documenta la presenza di anfore per vino importato) sia di fattura locale (specie nel periodo asmoneo); la scomparsa della "terra sigillata" durante il I secolo lascia intendere che essa fosse ormai considerata impura; l'esame petrografico delle stoviglie di Qumran suggerisce che l'argilla provenisse da Gerusalemme. Quanto alle lampade ad olio, si constata nel tardo sec I a.C. una variazione di tipologia: dalla forma "mold-made" (con la parte superiore piatta, adatta a raffigurazioni) alla forma "wheel-made" (con un ampio buco che invece impediva le raffigurazioni). I vasi in vetro si imposero nella seconda metà del sec. I a.C.; a Qumran non si menziona il vetro a proposito di impurità, a differenza dei rabbini (secondo cui essi si purificavano solo con la rottura). Il vasellame in pietra, specialmente giare ma anche boccali e piattini, è attestato ovunque, soprattutto nel nord del paese. I vasi in sterco crudo sono comuni tra il popolo e secondo la Mishnà non sono suscettibili di impurità.

L'argomento del breve capitolo "Dining Customs and Communal Meals" (77-84) è trattato più sulla base di fonti letterarie che non archeologiche, a parte il riferimento agli spaziosi triclini dei palazzi asmonei ed erodiani. L'informazione maggiore proviene dalla prassi dei pasti di gruppi specifici. Così Fl. Giuseppe sugli Esseni e i testi di Qumran parlano di una posizione da seduti (nei villaggi di solito si stava seduti per terra), mentre i Terapeuti secondo Filone Al. stavano adagiati alla maniera romana. I testi rabbinici suppongono entrambe le possibilità, mentre i Vangeli parlano abitualmente di posizione sdraiata. Esseni e Qumraniani, forse per motivi di purità, erano serviti con un piatto individuale (di qui le centinaia di piccoli piatti nelle dispense di Qumran), diversamente dai commensali del mondo romano che attingevano a un piatto comune, come del resto doveva fare il popolo comune (come Gesù nell'Ultima Cena).

Si tratta poi di "Sabbath Observance and Fasting" (85-96), dove il Sabato è studiato appunto in rapporto al cibo, non tanto al lavoro. Mentre gli Esseni e i Qumraniani ritengono che i cibi del Sabato devono essere preparati in anticipo, i rabbini non sempre seguono questa regola sia pure in via eccezionale (ma alcuni autori latini sembrano informare su un digiuno dei Giudei in giorno di Sabato). La Mishnà e la Tosefta attestano la pratica del digiuno il lunedì e il giovedì, ma non c'è alcuna documentazione che, a parte lo Yom Kippur, a Qumran si praticasse il digiuno in alcun giorno della settimana.

Il capitolo sulle monete, "Coins" (97-106), tratta anche più in generale della ricchezza, che a Qumran è annoverata come una delle tre reti di Belial. In effetti, Esseni e Qumraniani parlano di comunione di beni (così Filone, Fl. Giuseppe, e Plinio il Vecchio, oltre ai manoscritti di Qumran). La *élite* di Gerusalemme invece dispiega una vita da ricchi. Le 1.234 monete trovate da R. de Vaux nel sito di Qumran (ma non nelle grotte adiacenti) distinguono il luogo comunitario dalle abitazioni separate. Quanto alla tassa per il Tempio, essa doveva essere in *sheqel*/tetradracma d'argento di Tiro (e secondo Qumran doveva essere pagata non una volta l'anno ma una volta in vita); a Qumran sono stati trovati 561 pezzi, interpretati come tassa o alla comunità o a un Tempio futuro. Le 1.735 monete di bronzo, coniate da Alessandro Ianneo e trovate nel sito di Khirbet Mazin (5 km a sud di Qumran) sulla spiaggia del Mar Morto, tenendo conto che l'acqua si è ritirata nel tempo, sono interpretate o come carico di una barca affondata o come pratica di "nullificazione" di monete raccolte che non si potevano portare al tempio di Gerusalemme.

"Clothing and Tzitzit" è il titolo di un altro capitolo (107-120) che inizia col ricordare che i rabbini ammettevano la nudità in certi casi (lavoro nei campi, bagni, prima di essere flagellati; Melitone di Sardi afferma che Gesù fu crocifisso nudo), mentre al contrario gli Esseni e i Qumraniani per l'immersione richiedevano un perizoma per i maschi e il vestito per le donne. Il lino, non la lana, era il tessuto abituale per i sacerdoti e i membri delle comunità vi si adeguavano. È difficile dire quanto fosse esteso l'uso degli *tzitzit*, le frange ai quattro angoli del mantello, che Gesù portava (cf. Lc 8,44) e che comunque non sono attestati a Qumran, forse perché, essendo di lana, la norma biblica (Dt 22,11) proibisce la mescolanza di lino e lana.

In "Oil and Spit" (121-129) la Magness studia la combinazione dell'olio con il lavaggio: mentre essa è diffusa nell'antico mondo mediterraneo (cf. Gesù in Lc 7,46; Gv 12,3), gli Esseni ritengono che, senza l'assenso dell'interessato, l'olio contamina (così anche per Giacomo fratello di Gesù, secondo Egesippo). A Qumran si sono trovati solo tre unguentari, che, uniti all'assenza di bagni, indicano che la comunità non seguiva l'uso romano (dozzine invece sono stati trovati a Masada, mentre a Gamla sono l'8,5% del vasellame). Lo sputo è proibito dagli Esseni, come anche a Qumran, mentre i rabbini lo proibiscono sul Monte del Tempio, nell'assemblea (ma anche i

Romani lo vietano nei templi); invece, secondo i Romani, esso è considerato una protezione contro il malocchio (cf. l'uso di Gesù in Mc 7,33).

Il capitolo "Toilets and Toilet Habits" (130-144) comincia col ricordare che il mondo romano, nonostante i molti acquedotti, era connotato da sporcizia maleodorante e che non c'era alcuna *privacy* per la defecazione (l'archeologia attesta interi allineamenti di latrine), a parte le case private che usavano vasi appositi (attestati anche dai rabbini) svuotati poi in strada. Latrine pubbliche non sono però attestate in Palestina: sia Fl. Giuseppe sugli Esseni (che non dovevano defecare di sabato) sia a Qumran la defecazione doveva essere privata (e già secondo Erodoto i Persiani non dovevano defecare di fronte ad altri). A Qumran, oltre il fatto che 1QM prescrive il collocamento di latrine a una distanza di 2.000 cubiti dal campo, la defecazione è ritenuta fonte di impurità e richiede una immersione in un *miqveh*, come era per i sacerdoti. Non è così invece per i rabbini; anzi un testo talmudico la associa alla purità perché lascia il corpo pulito e rende l'uomo simile agli angeli; i rabbini però proibiscono la recita dello *Shemà* vicino ad escrementi.

Il capitolo più lungo è dedicato a "Tombs and Burial Customs" (145-180). L'A. comincia col considerare le tombe scavate nella roccia vicino a Gerusalemme, brevemente quelle del tardo periodo del Primo Tempio (poi scomparse) e più estesamente quelle del tardo periodo del Secondo Tempio. Le prime sono caratterizzate da una o due camere con ai lati banchi di pietra per adagiare i defunti e una buca per le ossa di precedenti sepolture. Tra le seconde, che appaiono solo con gli Asmonei (in numero di ca. 900 fino all'anno 70), la maggior parte non sono appariscenti, mentre altre sono di una monumentalità, piramidale, conica o a colonne, che è segno di ellenizzazione (tra cui spicca la tomba di Giasone degli inizi del sec. I a.C.); al loro interno, invece dei banchi di pietra, ci sono dei loculi (*kokhim*) per singoli defunti. La prassi degli ossuari appare verso gli anni 20-15 a.C. e resterà in auge fino al 70 d.C. (con sopravvivenze più modeste fino al III secolo). La questione, se questa prassi si debba spiegare con la fede farisaica nella resurrezione dei morti o semplicemente per l'influsso romano delle urne cinerarie, viene risolta dalla Magness nel secondo senso, sapendo comunque che la legge giudaica proibiva la cremazione. La documentazione di ossuari in Galilea e nella Giudea meridionale dopo il 70 si spiegherebbe per la dislocazione della *élite* gerosolimitana dopo la conquista romana della città; ma nel grande cimitero di Bet-Shearim nella bassa Galilea prevale ormai la inumazione in sarcofagi di pietra. In ogni caso, poiché la popolazione di Gerusalemme doveva essere di ca. 60.000 persone, la maggioranza della popolazione ha lasciato ben poche tracce archeologicamente rilevanti (del resto, per la stessa Roma si calcola che le sepolture conosciute corrispondano all'1,5% della popolazione); infatti continuava la sepoltura in cave o fosse anonime, come si vede a Qumran, dove si riteneva che chi entrasse nello spazio di

una tomba scavata nella roccia contraeva impurità. Al più si poneva a capo del tumulo una stele (per far notare a un passante di evitare l'impurità). La Magness dedica poi delle pagine molto interessanti (164-180), su cui non possiamo qui riferire in dettaglio, alla sepoltura di Gesù (con ragguaglio sulla caviglia inchiodata di Yohanan), alla tomba di Talpyot (ritenuta decisamente diversa da quella di Gesù), e alla cosiddetta tomba di Giacomo (considerata inattendibile).

L'ultimo breve capitolo, "Epilogue – The Aftermath of 70" (181-186), rimanda alla sopravvivenza dei dibattiti sulla purità tra i rabbini, constatando infine che installazioni e oggetti relativi ad essa scompaiono nella seconda metà del IV secolo.

Il volume offre opportunamente anche una serie di 48 illustrazioni fotografiche (collocate tra le pp. 96 e 97) e si chiude con le Note (187-270), la Bibliografia (271-305) e tre Indici (306-335). Come si è visto, il suo assunto generale è di tipo tematico, non localistico, e perciò non indaga tutti i luoghi della quotidianità giudaica (per esempio non illustra la vita dei villaggi come Nazaret o Cafarnao). Inoltre, in alcune materie omette qualche pezzo di documentazione (come nel capitolo sulle monete, che trascura l'ampia collezione presente nello Studium Biblicum Franciscanum di Gerusalemme). Ma nell'insieme l'opera costituisce certamente uno strumento utilissimo e perciò raccomandabile non solo per l'informazione ma pure per uno studio di approfondimento.

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